DOCUMENT RESUME

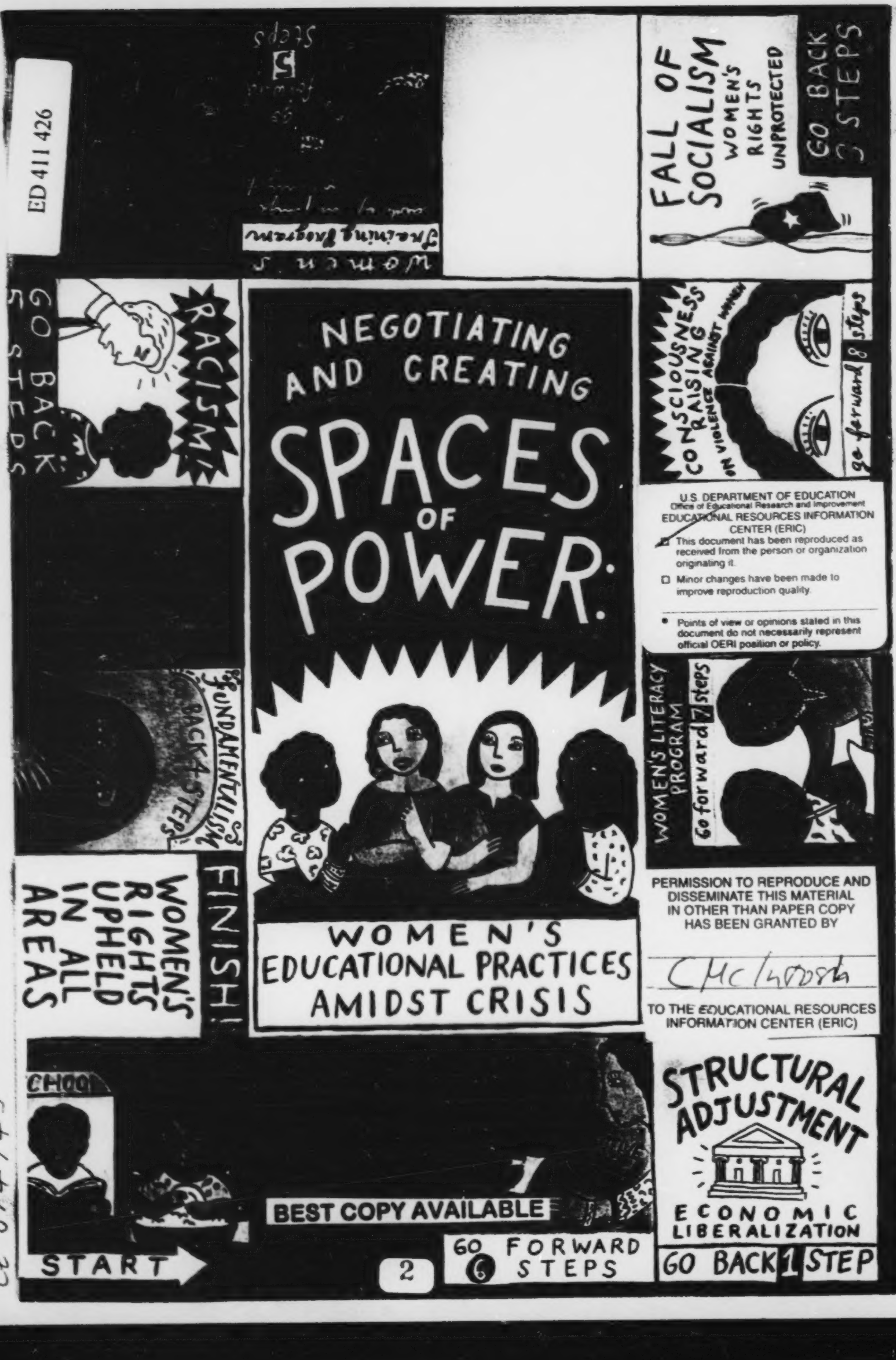
ED 411 426 CE 074 743

AUTHOR	Medel-Anonuevo, Carolyn, Ed.
TITLE	Negotiating and Creating Spaces of Power. Women's Educational Practices amidst Crisis. UIE Studies 7.
INSTITUTION	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, Hamburg (Germany). Inst. for Education.
ISBN	ISBN-92-820-1081-3
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	158p.
PUB TYPE	Opinion Papers (120) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC07 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; *Adult Learning; Adult Literacy; Citizen Participation; Citizenship; Developing Nations; *Economic Development; *Empowerment; Females; Feminism; Foreign Countries; Individual Power; *Labor Education; Literacy Education; Migrants; Participative Decision Making; Personal Autonomy; Power Structure; Self Actualization; Self Determination; *Social Change; Unions; Vocational Education; *Womens Education

ABSTRACT

This publication puts together the written contributions of 20 women at an international seminar-workshop on "Promoting the Empowerment of Women through Adult Learning" who shared, reflected, and analyzed the different types of educational opportunities for women provided to women. The presentations are as follows: "Designing the Model: A Process of Empowerment through Adult Education" (Ngarau Tarawa); "Education for Women's Empowerment or Schooling for Women's Subordination?" (Sara Hlupekile Longwe); "Literacy Practices among Adult Women: An Attempt at Critical Conceptualization" (Nelly P. Stromquist); "Participation in Adult Education in Western Countries: The Women's Perspective" (Sofia Valdivielso); "Development, Adult Learning, and Women" (Renuka Mishra); "Workers' Education: Vocational and Technical Training for Women in Vietnam" (Tran Thi Hoa); "Singapore National Trades Union Congress" (Christine Yeh); "Women Workers' Education in Malaysia: A Critical Review" (Chan Lean Heng); "General Outline for the Frame of Gender Training in Political and Trade Union Fields" (Miriam Berlak); "Political Participation and Citizenship in Cambodia" (Nanda Pok); "Women and Political Participation: Challenges from the National Coalition of Nicaraguan Women" (Malena de Montis); "Changing Mrs. Khosa's Reality: The Challenge for Adult Education in South Africa" (Shirley Walters); "Empowering Grassroots Women for Social Transformation" (Grace Noval); "Challenges for Women Learning from the Standpoint of the Latin American Seminar on Nonformal Education with Women" (Miryan Zuniga E.); "Women's Movement in Latin America and the Caribbean: 'Exercising Global Citizenship'" (Celia Eccher); "The Key Issue of Safety for Empowering Women through Adult Education" (Gillian Marie); "Reflections on Education of Migrant Women" (Caridad Tharan); "'Ministry of Manpower? Man-Power? Mum, Does That Mean Men Are More Powerful than Women?': Sharing Experiences in Gender Training in Education" (Sheila Parvyn Wamahiu); "Women and Adult Learning, Challenges to the Women's Movement" (Varda Muhlbauer); and "Themes, Dreams, and Strategies: Some Reflections on the Chiangmai Seminar" (Joyce Stalker). A list of contributors is appended. (YLB)

ED 411 426



NEGOTIATING AND CREATING SPACES OF POWER:

WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AMIDST CRISIS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN OTHER THAN PAPER COPY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
C McIntosh
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CE 074 743

UIE STUDIES 7 ✦ 1997

NEGOTIATING AND CREATING SPACES OF POWER

WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES AMIDST CRISIS

edited by Carolyn Medel-Añonuevo

UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg

The UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg, is a legally independent entity, while the programmes of the Institute are established along the lines laid down by the General Conference of UNESCO, the publications of the Institute are issued under its sole responsibility; UNESCO is not responsible for their contents.

The points of view, selection of facts, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with official positions of the UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg.

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the UNESCO Secretariat concerning the legal status of any country or territory, or its authorities, or concerning the delimitations of the frontiers of any country or territory.

Cover illustration: Joanne de Leon

© UNESCO Institute for Education 1997
Feldbrunnenstraße 58
P.O. Box 13 10 23
20110 Hamburg, Germany

ISBN 92 820 1081 3

Printed by
Robert Seemann ✦ Neumann-Reichard-Str. 27-33
Haus 8, I Stock
22041 Hamburg Germany ✦ Tel 040/656-0003

PREFACE

Every twelve years, an International Conference on Adult Education is organized under the leadership of UNESCO and in collaboration with other UN and bilateral agencies. The fifth conference to be held in July 1997 in Hamburg (CONFINTEA V) promises to be distinctly different from earlier conferences because it comes at a time when the boundaries of state, civil society and market relations are constantly being renegotiated and which has meant for many countries, a strong and louder voice for NGOs and people´s organizations. Furthermore, since the fourth conference in 1985, several UN Conferences on different issues ranging from literacy, environment, human rights, population, social development and women, have been held, all assigning a critical role to education. The Hamburg conference comes then at a time when the definition of adult education has not only been expanded but also appropriated by all sectors of society and encompassing all areas of life.

As one of the preparatory activities for CONFINTEA V, an international seminar-workshop on "Promoting the Empowerment of Women Through Adult Learning" was held in Chiangmai, Thailand from Feb. 24 to 28, 1997. Thirty seven women from twenty four countries shared, reflected and analyzed the different types of educational opportunities for women provided to women for the first three days. On the basis of this collective appraisal, the remaining two days were spent reviewing the Draft Agenda for the Future of Adult Learning (one of the working documents for CONFINTEA V) and formulating alternative statements that would reflect not only women concerns but also incorporate a gender perspective on adult education.

This publication puts together the written contributions of twenty women in those first three days and is a reflection of the diversity of contexts , the range of issues addressed as well the varying levels of presentation throughout the workshop. Unfortunately it is not able to capture the richness and complexity of the discussion that emanated from the powerful exposition of the participants. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this publication would contribute to the many other initiatives that seek to introduce a sharper analysis of the relationship between adult education and women´s empowerment. We are therefore grateful to the thirty seven women for the valuable time they have shared with us and without their inputs, this publication would not be possible.

Through our collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) in Thailand, the UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and Pacific (PROAP), the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) of the Ministry of Education of Thailand and the Foundation for Women (FFW) in Thailand, we have been able to surround ourselves with local hosts who made us feel at home in Chiangmai.

Special mention should go to Katya Meyer, Preeda Sirisawat and Banchongsiri Ratanapojnard (FES), Usa Duangsaa (NAPAC), Lucille Gregorio and Amporn Ratanavipak (PROAP), Kasama Varavarn and Vachiraporn Amiratanan (DNFE), and Louise Silz (UIE)for organizing the miscellaneous details prior to and during the seminar-workshop.

Bringing together all these women would have been impossible if not for the financial support of the Foreign Office of the German government, the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Dutch government and the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

Finally, this publication is made possible by the painstaking !ay-out work of Cendrine Sebastiani of the Publications Section of UIE and the typing assistance of Suzanne Musiol and Betty Train. We also are grateful to Joanne de Leon, our artist for this publication´s cover.

Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo
Research Specialist on Women´s Education
UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 7

DESIGNING THE MODEL - A Process of Empowerment through Adult Education - Ngarau Tarawa 11

EDUCATION FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT OR SCHOOLING FOR WOMEN'S SUBORDINATION - Sara Hlupekile Longwe 17

LITERACY PRACTICES AMONG ADULT WOMEN: An Attempt at Critical Conceptualization - Nelly P. Stromquist 25

PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION IN WESTERN COUNTRIES: The Women's Perspective - Sofia Valdivielso 33

DEVELOPMENT, ADULT LEARNING AND WOMEN
Renuka Mishra 45

WORKERS' EDUCATION: VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR WOMEN IN VIETNAM - Tran Thi Hoa 61

SINGAPORE NATIONAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS
Christine Yeh 65

WOMEN WORKERS' EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA
Chan Lean Heng 75

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR THE FRAME OF GENDER TRAINING IN POLITICAL AND TRADE UNION FIELDS - Miriam Berlak 85

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP IN CAMBODIA
Nanda Pok 93

WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: Challenges from the National Coalition of Nicaraguan Women - Malena de Montis 97

CHANGING MRS KHOSA'S REALITY: The Challenge for Adult Education in South Africa - Shirley Walters 107

EMPOWERING GRASSROOTS WOMEN FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
Grace Noval 115

CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN LEARNING FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN SEMINAR ON NON FORMAL EDUCATION WITH WOMEN - Miryan Zúñiga E. 119

WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: "EXERCISING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP" - Celia Eccher 125

THE KEY ISSUE OF SAFETY FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION - Gillian Marie 133

REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN
Caridad Tharan 143

"MINISTRY OF MANPOWER? MAN-POWER? MUM, DOES THAT MEAN THAT MEN ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN WOMEN?" : Sharing Experiences in Gender Training in Education - Sheila Parvyn Wamahiu 151

WOMEN AND ADULT LEARNING, CHALLENGES TO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS - Varda Muhlbauer 159

THEMES, DREAMS AND STRATEGIES: Some Reflections on the Chiangmai Seminar - Joyce Stalker 165

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS 171

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1990 Jomtien Conference on Education for All (EFA) up to the Beijing World Conference of Women in 1995, education of women has been thrust in the center of government and NGO´s pronouncements, as they acknowledged the importance of providing women equal access to school and other educational opportunities. In Beijing, the discussion has led to a deeper reflection of the interconnections of women´s education and empowerment as well as the complex relationships between democratizing opportunities and the content of the provisions.

As one of the preparatory activities for CONFINTEA V, the seminar-workshop in Chiangmai was confronted with the challenge of further articulating the diverse perspectives of women in the previous UN conferences and sustaining the gains that have been achieved. Therefore, when the program for this international seminar-workshop was being conceptualized, two questions were in foreground, who to invite and what areas of education should be covered. What was clear was that we wanted to bring together educators as well as researchers who would be able to listen to each other and together build an analytical framework that could be used not only as a basis for lobbying during CONFINTEA but also as a tool to reflect on our educational practices. As we found out, this proved a complex task as each of us had to first familiarize ourselves with each others context as well as the specificities of our education and research work.

The contributions in this publication have been grouped into four sections according to the area and issue which it is mainly addressing itself to: the first, on literacy and education; followed by the different experiences in workers; the third , on political participation and the last, on the variety of educational provisions that have emerged in the decade in response to the urgent issues women are faced with. As one reads through the texts, one will notice that in one way, this is a "false division" as in the end, all these experiences talk about giving women access to basic information, skills and knowledge that could help them in overcoming their discriminated and subordinated position in society.

Indeed while the women talked about their education and research practices, a closer examination will show that in fact, what women heard were DIVERSE voices, from an indigenous woman, to a woman trade union educator, to a politician, to a woman who has survived violence, to a university-based researcher, to a literacy teacher up to a professional gender trainer and consultant, who have shared their knowledge, based on their specific locations in society. A relevant question to ask is whether there can be one model of adult education that could address all these women's concerns or should one in fact, start with the assumption that given the diversity of women's conditions, one has to accommodate different models. The policy implications of such diversity is articulated by Marie who points out that " Making policy for ALL women is indeed a challenge. It is important to recognize that we do not have the answers for all women. We need to both recognize that we come with our own perspectives that have shaped us and our understanding, and also formulate policy that is inclusive and can be used by women from cultures, countries and economies that are very different to our own and by women who have different strategic needs at this historical moment".

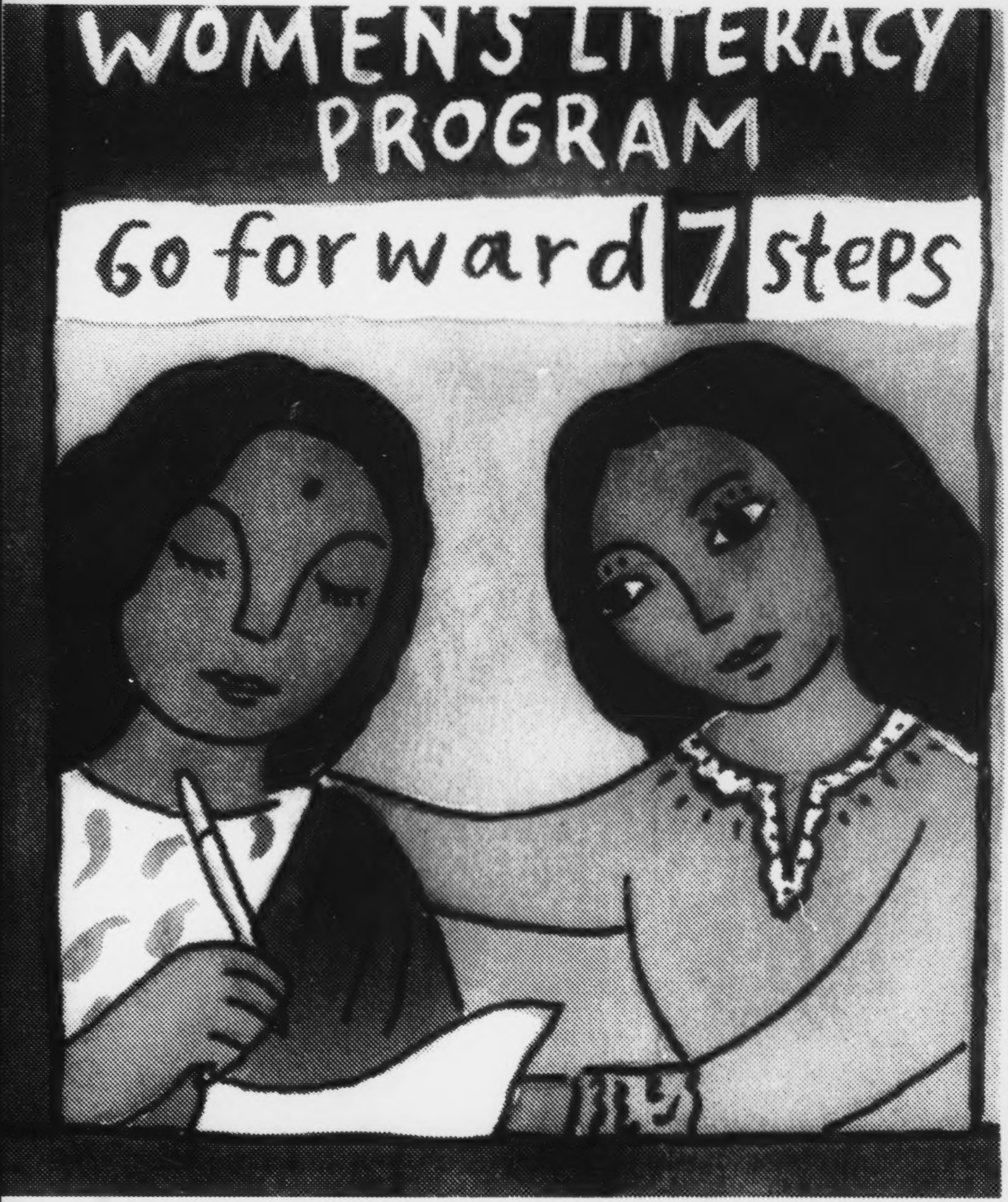
The MACRO economic, political and social context, the participants reflected, can be both limiting and providing possibilities for action. Many women agreed that globalization, structural adjustment and privatization had disastrous effects on the lives of women and consequently, limited their access to educational opportunities. Even while there is so much talk about women´s participation in politics, the reality is that women´s presence in this sphere has in fact declined (Montis, Pok). At the same time, one is reminded that certain political changes can provide women spaces from which to negotiate as pointed out by Walters or how discussions in the regional level (in Latin America) can in fact contribute to the development of a gender perspective on citizenship (Berlak, Eccher) which in turn can shape the ongoing discussions on the relationship between democracy and citizenship. Furthermore as the world rapidly changes, women recognize that they have to LEARN NEW WAYS of doing things, innovative ways of organizing, (Noval, Tharan, Tran, Yeh, Wamahiu), strategizing (Eccher) and networking.

The NEED TO MAKE LINKS between these macro realities and the micro-lives of women is important not only to sharpen our understanding of the effects of these global changes on people but also to help us in conceptualizing educational policies and programmes that are able to articulate these relationships. The link between development, education and improving the lives of women, while taken for granted is in fact a problematic relationship as explained by Longwe and Mishra. Furthermore as Stromquist and Longwe demonstrate, literacy and education programmes for women, in reality contribute to reinforcing stereotype and subordinated images of women contrary to the empowering potentials many claim it has.

A HOLISTIC, instead of a dichotomous, perspective to women´s education is necessary and Tarawa reflects on how indigenous knowledge can contribute to this. The need to incorporate the traditional knowledge of women is also pointed out by Mishra and Zuniga. On a different dimension but still related to the development of a holistic perspective, women reflected on the dominance of the discourse on the cognitive effects of education which has resulted in the marginalization of the affective dimensions of education. In fact as demonstrated by Chan, Marie, Montis, Muhlbauer and Valdivielso, the emotional subordination of women is one area that has to be urgently addressed if we would like to address the encompassing and totalizing subordinated existence of women.

The PEDAGOCICAL implications for addressing the above concerns have to be threshed out and as many of the women make clear, this can only be done with the participation of women. Starting from women´s realities, their knowledge, their subjectivities and language, empowering educational programmes for women should make the link between the existing discriminatory and oppressive practices and the need for transforming individuals, relationships, communities and societies.

Women are slowly and painfully recognizing that the world they live in is fraught with POWER relationships --- not only in the larger society or communities but also in the intimate confines of their homes and within themselves. While confronted with immense and formidable structures, which constantly push them backwards, women have not lost hope and instead continuously gain strength in the knowledge and practice that together, it is still possible to NEGOTIATE and CREATE SPACES OF POWER.


WOMEN'S LITERACY PROGRAM
Go forward 7 steps

DESIGNING THE MODEL
A Process of Empowerment Through Adult Education

Ngarau Tarawa

E kore au e ngaro;
Te kakano I ruia mai I Rangiatgea
I shall never be lost;
the seed which was sown from Rangiatea

These words must surely have inspired a note of optimism in the tupuna (ancestors) of old as they left the ancestral shores of Rangiatea, Hawaiki, in search of the new frontier. In the event of the new millennium, we may well be sounding that same note of optimism with perhaps more than a touch of trepidation. Thoughts of shaping the new century, will no doubt place some of us in a state of careful forethought. Some will be pushed from behind, and others will quicken their pace at the prospect of an attractive new order.

Whatever the propulsion, one thing is for certain, we will all move into the newest frontier carrying our own particular legacies transferred from previous guardians. It is time for us to reaffirm our existence as a nation with a past, acknowledge our role as guardians of our collective experience, and pass it on. Perhaps in the transition, we will be echoing the whakatauki (Maori proverb) of those first settlers of Aotearoa as we sail into the impending winds of change - *E kore au e ngaro; te kakano I ruia mai I Rangiatea.*

PASSING IT ON........

The act of "passing it on" depends on the model of learning. It is reliant on the creativity of the people who are entrusted with that responsibility. Various models were adopted by previous trustees who communicated knowledge in accordance with the cultural process and practices of its societies. However, in the course of our colonial history, some models were thrust upon the recipients who were, more often than not, in a state of powerlessness. That is, people whose own power base had been rendered useless by superimposed structures of another culture.

It is not my intention to cover the history of teaching and learning models, or to critique them, but rather to argue in favour of the right of a people to design its own model and to perceive its message in ways that encompasses its values, culture and language.

This paper will endeavour to show justification for a Maori model for education, based on the Treaty of Waitangi (document signed by two parties, British Crown and Maori - indigenous peoples of Aotearoa - February, 1840) in our case adult education.

The first section presents a historical overview of Maori education. The second underlines some key issues to developing the potential of Maori education. In particular, the recognition of a holistic, indigenous perspective. The last part highlights some trends which support the role of adult education for Maori, both here and at an international level.

A. Maori Education: One Hundred and Fifty Years of Unlearning, Learning and Re-learning.

Some twenty five years before the signing of the Treaty, education for Maori was already in progress. Early accounts from Mission schools[1] record material used in the education of Maori where the language of instruction was Te Reo Maori.

Although the first instructors of the new learning's were from another land, they understood one of the fundamental principles of pedagogy, that is, education for the people by the people. In other words, the teacher learned the ways of Maori, trained key people, who in turn became teachers or facilitators of learning themselves. Maori were able to perceive the message "in accordance with its values, culture and language".

Maori literacy flourished and publications written in Te Reo Maori began appearing from about mid-century.

However, by 1858, government grants to Mission schools were made on the condition that English be used also, in the instruction of Maori people. A few years later, that instruction was to be in English only. The use of Te Reo Maori as a teaching medium diminished. So too did the level of Maori language fluency. Blatant disregard of Maori vowel sounds created gross mispronunciations of Maori family names and surnames.

I recall some years ago, I attended a seventy fifth jubilee of a school where I was a former student. During the roll call, my sister and I waited for our names to be announced and it was not. When we inquired at the registration desk, we discovered we were listed, but under Edwards. Our name was Eruera. Another revelation was that many other Maori ex-pupils were listed under an English equivalent name.

Mainstream education had all but been consumed by policies of assimilation.

From the early years of this century, Maori protest could be heard on Marae (traditional Maori meeting place), in calls petitioning Parliament and in active dissent rejecting government policies. Policies that promoted a one-style monocultural model and failed to give attention to "other ways" of learning.

From those early rumbles, it was clear that other models needed to be considered.

B. Key issues to Maori Development

One of the key issues for Maori, in developing an education model that would enhance their quality of life, is one of language. For a people to claim its history, its knowledge, its custom and its identity, it must have access to the language in which those traditions were first expressed.

In recent years, a number of Maori initiatives have made inroads to developing curricula for its learning communities. In the early 1980s we saw the beginning stages of Te Kohanga Reo(pre-school Maori language centers). Other initiatives followed, for instance, Kura Kaupapa (total emersion Maori language schools for 5-12 years old) who welcomed first entrants coming from TE Kohanga Reo. Te Taura Whiri I Te Teo Maori (Maori Language Commission) launched its Celebration of Maori Language - He Taonga Te Reo, in 1995. At the same time, many institutions, organisations and workplaces were adopting practices to fit their policies of biculturalism.

While all these activities were flourishing the road to language recovery looked promising. However, there was a growing awareness that verbal expression could only be supported and maintained by including all the component parts necessary to carry learning patterns to new generations. A holistic, indigenous approach was being acknowledged.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed that 1993 be the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. A statement issued from the United Nations states that[2]

"indigenous communities, peoples and nations have

- a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies ......
- consider themselves distinct ......
- a profound attachment to their traditional land."

The Treaty of Waitangi[3] (Article 2 re Tino Rangatiratanga - Maori Sovereignty) affirms

- pre-existing power and authority over the land
- the continuing right of autonomy and self-determination for Maori.

Both accounts acknowledge a holistic perspective, one which considers the rights of peoples to maintain their indigenous identities.

The Maori have spent much energy in rescuing and preserving some traditional forms of learning and in employing full use of the concept of holism. The dismal record of low achievement of Maori[4] can be seen in the mainstream, mono-serviced education system. These records bear weight to the notion that Maori aspirations cannot be advanced without a holistic indigenous expression.

So how does that expression apply to education for an adult Maori?

Incidentally, you may have observed my discourse, that I refrained from using the term Maori Adult Education, but rather I have used references like "education for adult Maori" and/or "indigenous education". If we follow the premise that Maori education works at a holistic level, then the term "Maori adult education" becomes redundant. That is, education for Maori adult must not be compartmentalized, but should incorporate elements of traditional models.

I have often envied the parents who sit in on Te Kohanga Reo sessions. There is this wonderful story that honors little beings as the "children of God", as in Tamariki - Tama (small child) a - Ariki (of God). As adults we carry that legacy with us - we are adults, but children as well.

I am also reminded of another story that describes the intricate nature of human development. The story begins with Maui, (an ancestral hero) who, as we are told in a number of purakau (Maori myths and legend) was the youngest of four brothers, Maui-mua; Maui-taha; Maui-roto; Maui-pae. Being the youngest of course, Maui was often called Maui-potiki (Potiki = youngest child)

The story as I heard it, expressed all the elements of human development. For instance, Maui-roto who reminds us of the child within us; Maui-taha, the child at our side who influences our behaviour (e.g. peer pressure); Maui-mua, the child in front of us, who leads the way; and Maui-pae, the all-knowing child, the wise, intelligent child. Maui-potiki of course, possessed those qualities that many last born children have - adventurous, fearless, boisterous (remember, he fished up the North Island). Qualities we would all like to have.

Perhaps these are some things to consider when planning educational programmes for adults.

While all this may sound terribly provincial and "homey", we (Maori) are aware of the kindred feeling being expressed abroad and are grateful for the opportunity to add to the collective indigenous voice at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V) in Hamburg.

C. The Special Role of Adult Education

In the twelve years since the last international conference on adult education, indigenous communities have taken their collective voices aboard and demanded attention to their basic right to learn in ways relevant to them. About 300 million indigenous[5] people live on this earth. The

Maori claim this distinction and their status is recognised and accepted by the UN.

In January of this year many of these communities were represented at the "International Seminar on New Perspective's on Adult Education for Indigenous Peoples´ in Mexico. These delegates, including our own from Aotearoa[6], produced the Huaxyacac (Oaxaca) Declaration on Adult Education for Indigenous Populations where the special role of adult education is captured in its content. That indigenous peoples be accorded the right to enhance and maintain their quality of life "according to their priorities and using their skills and traditional resources ......", is also emphasized in the Declaration.

The Chiang Mai Seminar-Workshop on "Promoting the Empowerment of Women Through Adult Learning", made particular reference to the need to design specific programmes for women and to develop a global platform for female participation.

My own personal philosophy does not permit me to isolate Maori women´s experiences, but rather to articulate those experiences within the context of a holistic, indigenous expression. I am fortunate to have been placed in a position to provide for Maori adults who have expressed the need to learn. However, the provision of any educational service, must be accompanied by comprehensive policies which take into account the critical role of tangata whenua (First peoples of the land) as guardians of their own indigenous knowledge systems and their right to learn in accordance with their traditional values, culture and language.

My participation at the international workshops has prompted me to look at some follow-up strategies that may allow for a more integrated approach to indigenous learning. This paper calls for the integration of an indigenous viewpoint into adult learning policies and supports budget proposals that seek realistic allocations from Governments and other international funding bodies to resource programmes.

My observations also reaffirmed some of my own perspectives which are grounded in my experiences as an adult educator, an organiser and facilitator of education programmes for Maori, but more importantly, as a Maori woman who shares the collective realities of her indigenous forebears.

CONCLUSION

If what I have said so far justifies the conclusion that all Maori educational models must be based on the Treaty of Waitangi then, as a natural consequence, tino rangatiratanga (Maori Sovereignty) would be integral to each course of learning. This fundamental principle of self-determination would serve as a guide and reference to the development and role of adult education.

Historically, the role of community education in Aotearoa has been to promote all dimensions of life-long learning. In the light of the proposals being put to CONFINTEA, I believe adult education providers must critically review that role to ensure that a Maori dimension is present. If gaps are identified, then clearly the service must be extended to accommodate Maori models of learning.

On a final note, as the potential for creative and innovative programmes for Maori adults emerges, so too does the need to invest more resources into adult education. CONFINTEA is promoting as its motto "Adult Learning: A key to the 21st Century". If learning is the key to opening doors in the new century, I want to be one of those who fashions and fits the key into the new locks.

Na reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, ena tatou katoa.

Endnotes

1. "Christianity and the Maoris to 1840", 1968. New Zealand Journal of History,Vol. 141,

2. Read "Draft United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples" 1994.

3. Article 2 re Tino Rangatiratanga - Tiriti O Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi).

4. Government Census, 1996.

5. Definition of "Indigenous"prepared by José Martinex Cobo for UN. Read Report of Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, 1982.

7. Delegate Nora Rameka, Maori Community Education Officer, University of Waikato, Hamilton, Aotearoa.

EDUCATION FOR WOMEN´S EMPOWERMENT OR SCHOOLING FOR WOMEN´S SUBORDINATION?

Sara Hlupekile Longwe

INTRODUCTION

This paper is concerned with identifying the main elements in a programme of education for women´s empowerment, by contrasting such education with its opposite - schooling for subordination.

The author begins by drawing some lessons from her experience in the field of gender and development, to distinguish between two very different perspectives on women´s advancement. The lesser perspective considers only women´s advancement within the existing patriarchal social structure, whereas a more radical perspective sees women´s advancement as necessarily involving the transformation of patriarchal society.

These alternative perspectives bring with them very different definitions of what is meant by women´s empowerment. The weaker meaning is better interpreted as individual self-reliance, since the word ´empowerment´ seems too strong for what is actually being proposed. This may be contrasted with the stronger meaning, for which the term "women´s empowerment" can properly be used, which is essentially concerned with collective action to overcome gender inequality.

The paper argues that the lesser perspective, by editing out the political and ideological dimensions of women´s struggle, cannot provide any adequate theoretical basis for women´s advancement. Instead, this watered down interpretation of the process of women´s advancement provides the basis and legitimation for women´s continued subordination.

These very different uses of the word "empowerment" automatically lead to very different perspectives on what we mean by education for women´s empowerment. The lesser perspective involves conventional schooling for women within the existing school system, as a basis for improving their overall position in society. But this paper instead interprets this as a process of schooling for women´s subordination.

It is here argued that education for empowerment needs to reverse the values and beliefs which have been inculcated within the conventional school system. Education for empowerment is concerned with the process of enlightenment, conscientisation and collective organization. This involves a collective effort by adult women to throw off the patriarchal beliefs and attitudes they imbibed during their years of formal schooling.

TWO ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER TRAINING

As a preliminary general definition, we may define gender training as providing the skills and methods for improved gender orientation of development programmes. Such training is provided to development agencies, to enable the design of programmes which recognize and address gender issues which stand in the way of development. Comprehensive training is directed at all levels of the development process - from policy makers at one end, to the affected community at the other. Perhaps we can all agree on the above general definition of gender training. However, any closer definition of the term will open up the distinction between conservative and radical definitions of the term.

A. The Conservative Definition of Gender Training

The conservative definition of gender training is confined to the perception that gender issues in development are primarily concerned with increasing women's access to resources, based on an understanding of the present gender division of labor, and the gender division in access to productive resources.

This understanding of the role of gender training is still rooted in the Boserup perception that women are an "overlooked resource".[1] A paradigm example of the problem to be tackled is the story of a development programme which failed because it gave a heavier burden of labor to the women of the community, when they were already overburdened and stretched to the limit.

The lesson from such a cautionary tale is "first do the gender analysis" to reveal the gender division of labor. In that way you will be able to utilize women's labor more effectively, lessen their burden of labor, increase their access to labor saving technology, and provide the skills for more efficient production. By this means you can enable the women's participation in the programme, and their benefit from it. This is seen as the key to effective programme implementation.

Clearly the overall perception here is that the efficiency of programmes can be much improved if they are based on a proper understanding of the social and economic location of women, and their special needs. At the planning level, gender training is therefore directed at basing plans on a detailed situation analysis of the gender division of labor and access to resources. At the community level, gender training is directed towards training women in acquiring productive skills, accessing productive resources, using appropriate labor saving technology, improving literacy, and so on.

B. The Radical Definition of Gender Training

The radical definition of gender training can be understood as being a reaction to the limitations of the conservative perspective. The conservative definition overlooks the extent to which the unequal division of labor, and women's limited access to resources, are entrenched elements within the patriarchal structure of society.

In a patriarchal society the essential underlying gender division is that men have the larger share in decision making, and women have the larger share of work. This pattern of gender division is very much in the male interest, and rooted in patriarchal traditional belief. Therefore, as a development programme attempts any redistribution of resources between the genders, the programme will run into patriarchal resistance.

In a patriarchal society, women's limited access to resources is based on established discriminatory practices (often sanctioned by law), which ensure male privilege. In South Africa this male privilege includes the control and ownership of land, and the control of family income. Women themselves are also 'owned' by men, who buy them for a bride price, and may "own" several wives. Male wealth is based on exploitation of female labor, and individual male wealth may be increased by acquisition of additional wives.

The conservative perspective is confined to a merely technical or economic approach to gender issues, overlooking this political dimension. If the conservative project of "increasing women's access to resources" is actually attempted, it immediately runs into the problem that women's access to resources is limited by entrenched gender discrimination which ensures male control over those same resources.

Therefore increasing women's access to resources will involve removing these discriminatory practices. Inevitably a development programme must either tackle this political dimension, or abdicate any claim that it is addressing issues of gender inequality in access to resources.

Here lies the difference between the conservative and radical approaches to gender training. Radical gender training takes as its starting point that gender inequality in access to resources is the superficial or economic aspect of the problem, and that development must entail recognizing and addressing the underlying causes which are rooted in structural gender inequality.

Therefore radical gender training is concerned with enabling participants to recognize the political and ideological dimensions of gender inequality, and to address problems on this basis. Gender training is therefore largely concerned with the process of "conscientisation", of enabling participants to step outside of patriarchal culture, and adopt a more feminist consciousness. Conscientisation involves the crucial realization and revelation that women´s poverty and low status does not arise primarily from their own lack of individual effort, or from lack of literacy or schooling.

Conscientisation involves women´s identification of the extent that their problems arise from gender discrimination within the social system, which automatically cut them off from the same opportunities which are given to men. Within a situation of structural gender inequality, women´s advancement cannot be ensured by policies purely concerned with women´s increased effort, skill training and increased productivity. On the contrary, gender training must be largely concerned with providing the analytical tools for participants to become dissatisfied with the current unequal gender division of society, which they (may have) previously accepted and taken for granted.

Radical gender training is also concerned with enabling people whose dissatisfaction was previously generated and dissipated at the personal and domestic level, to collectively mobilize around the analysis of gender issues, and around public action to address these issues.

TWO DEFINITIONS OF WOMEN´S EMPOWERMENT

One might reasonably expect that the above two (near opposite!) perspectives on gender training, would generate two quite different forms of discourse. However, there seems to be insufficient recognition of these two very different paradigms within the field of gender and development.

To a large extent proponents from opposite sides of the divide seem, at least on the surface, to be saying much the same thing. Very often, the opposition of their positions cannot be found in the text, unless one is aware that each side is using the same words in an opposite way. A main purpose of this paper is to expose these two opposite points of view, which hide under the same vocabulary.

The word ´equity´ is a good example. Both sides are likely to talk with equal enthusiasm about the importance of gender equity, but the meanings are opposite. When the conservatives talk of equity, it is because the word "equality" sticks in their throats. They have accepted the unequal position of women, and are trying to achieve a more "just" or "equitable" position for women within the existing patriarchal society.

The radicals also use the word "equity", but with an opposite rationale. For them, equality is insufficient, and falls short of their ideals. They are not seeking equality for women within the present social system. They are interested in structural transformation towards a more just society, run according to feminist principles. Because gender equality within a patriarchal society is undesirable and perhaps incomprehensible, they use the term "gender equity" to denote their ambition for a new form of gender justice within an egalitarian society of the future.

A. Economic Empowerment - or Self Reliance

The central phrase in the Beijing Platform for Action, "women´s empowerment", is also used by the two opposing camps in opposite ways. The conservative camp has a purely economic and individual version of this concept, which defines empowerment as women´s capacity to make the best of their own lives. From this point of view a woman is ´empowered´ when she has literacy, education, productive skills, access to capital, confidence in herself, and so on. Then she can "get ahead" on the basis of her own qualifications and ability, and is said to be "empowered".

The model for this "empowered" woman seems to be the individual female entrepreneur or professional, who has got ahead of her sisters by her improved access to resources, and utilization of these resources.

From the radical point of view, this view of empowerment is fatally limited. It is a perspective based on the advancement of the individual, without any societal perspective of the problem. It is concerned with enabling women to advance within the present society, rather than through structural transformation. It ignores the extent to which the "empowered" woman remains restricted by gender discrimination. It fails to address the gender dimension, since it does not address the question of whether a man, with the same access to resources as the "empowered" woman, actually occupies a more privileged position in terms of control over income, social status and political position in society.

This limited view of empowerment, as individual self-reliance, has no potential for recognizing or addressing the question of how a woman can gain increased access to resources if the hurdles of gender discrimination remain in place. If proponents of the "self-reliance model" admit that gender discrimination needs to be removed, this model of empowerment provides no understanding of the problem of structural inequality, and no understanding of the development process by which such structural inequality can be dismantled.

There seems to be an implicit assumption, within the "self-reliance model", that women´s increased access to resources is going to be "given" by the men presently in control. (Explain it to them nicely!)

But in politics nothing is given. Empowerment involves the process of taking. Or, more precisely, empowerment means generating enough political mobilization and organization so that we are in a position to take. If we wait to be given, definitely we shall wait forever.

Perhaps most fundamentally, the "self-reliance model" ignores the extent to which the "empowered" woman has got ahead at the expense of her sisters, for example by exploiting their cheap labor, or by being adopted as an "honourary male", or otherwise a "token female", within the patriarchal system. To the extent that an individual woman´s advancement is at the expense of her sisters, obviously this is the extent to which the method is not generally applicable to the rest of the sisterhood.

B. The Full Meaning of Women´s Empowerment

From the radical perspective, if "self-reliance" is used interchangeably with "empowerment", this entails a watering down - even corruption - of the vocabulary for women´s advancement.

This perspective of "self-reliance" has no theoretical power for exploring the political and ideological dimensions of women´s empowerment. It should be understood as part of a watered down vocabulary for getting the awkward question of women's empowerment off of the political agenda. It is part of the vocabulary of a shallow discourse which has considerable potential for sidetracking and betraying the women's struggle.

In this paper, women's empowerment means the process by which women collectively come to recognize and address the gender issues which stand in way of their advancement. In a patriarchal society, these gender issues are the practices of gender discrimination which are entrenched in custom, law and ideological belief.

Since a development programme is concerned with the process of social change, it is an ideal site for enabling and encouraging the process of women's empowerment. Community participation is now an accepted intervention strategy for most development agencies, so women's participation within this development process provides the opportunity for increased women's empowerment. This empowerment entails women increasing their level of control over the allocation of resources, by identifying and ending the discriminatory practices which stand in the way of their control over these resources.

Conversely, if women fail to mobilize to advance their interests during programmes for social change, patriarchal organization will surely take full advantage of the changing situation to tighten the male monopoly of decision making, so as to gain further male advantage in the gender division of productive resources and other benefits.

TWO ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVES ON EDUCATION FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The above two perspectives on the meaning of women's empowerment obviously entail quite different types of intervention which are likely to be proposed to enable women's empowerment. Here we look particularly at educational interventions, to distinguish between schooling for women's subordination, by comparison with education for women's empowerment.

A. Schooling for Subordination

It is a common and somewhat unexamined belief that increased schooling for women will automatically bring about women's advancement. It is often assumed that it is lack of schooling which has been holding women back. Increased female enrolment in schools is seen as a means to bring about gender equality in professional occupations, within government, and ultimately within the wider society.

Such beliefs are based on the patriarchal explanation for women's subordination, which is that women are in a subordinate position because of their lack of formal qualifications. In other words, lack of formal education has long been the patriarchal excuse for women's lower socio-economic status. Women's lack of education becomes the legitimation of male supremacy.

However, there is little or no evidence that women's lack of formal schooling is a factor in women's lower socio-economic status, and subordinate position in the political arena. For example Zambia, immediately after independence, invested massively in schooling at all levels, and had achieved near universal primary education by the 1980s. At independence in 1964 there were only about five female university graduates; by 1991 there were about five thousand. But during this period the proportion of women in parliament did not change - if remained static, at about 6%. In Zambia the socio-economic position of women relative to men has not changed much during this period.

Despite the relatively high level of female schooling, Zambia today still has legalized discrimination against women: gender discrimination under customary law remains protected under the new 1996 Constitution.

Internationally, there may be a general correlation between women's level of schooling and their level of political participation, but the Zambian example strongly suggests that there is no causal connection. The case of the United States is more notable, where women's high levels of formal schooling have not disturbed the male grip upon the political system, and female representation in Congress remains at 14%.

The main reason why women's increased levels of formal schooling does not affect their level of political representation is that the political system is a male club which operates a gatekeeping system to keep women out. Women's lack of schooling will be used as part of the legitimation for this gatekeeping for as long as it appears to be a legitimate excuse. But when women gain high levels of schooling, other criteria for gatekeeping become more important. For example, women are excluded because it is said that they have no time for politics because of domestic duties, because they are under the control of a husband, because they lack the necessary aggression for political office, and so on. Patriarchal gatekeeping also involves a range of "dirty tricks" to prevent women being adopted as candidates for political office.

But if we take the broader view, will women's higher level of schooling enable them to better recognize and address gender issues, and contribute to the women's struggle? Will women with schooling begin their own independent women's movement, to challenge the male club which controls the political system, and which maintains the state of gender discrimination? In other words, can schooling provide the basis for women's empowerment?

In my experience, schools have entirely the opposite effect. Schools are patriarchal establishments which are grounded in the values and rules of patriarchal society. Pupils are schooled to conform, and to do as they are told. In other words, girls are taught to accept patriarchal authority, and not to ask questions or think for themselves. Obviously this is the opposite of education. That is why it is here called schooling.

Females are schooled to accept the "naturalness" of male domination. They are schooled to accept success on male terms. The few women who reach the top are schooled to behave as 'honourary males'. Top women professionals are accepted on sufferance within the male system, and have been schooled to believe that women already have equality. They believe that women already have equality because they themselves have reached the top! They will even boldly ask you "I got to the top, so what's wrong with you others?" In other words, most top women suffer from the Thatcher Syndrome. It is schools which did it to them.

The honourary male is often also a "queen bee". The last thing she wants to do is to enable any other woman to follow in her tracks. On the contrary, she will constantly kick back down the ladder, to prevent any other female ascending to challenge her unrivaled and peculiar position as an honourary male amongst the men. She is violently opposed to affirmative action to increase the proportion of women, and will immediately reply that "I got here on merit, and so must the others!"

Here we see that schooling is for the promotion of a few women within the existing patriarchal system. Schooling provides benefits for a few individual women, at the expense of their sisters that are left behind. The honourary male contributes to the continuation of the system that subordinates her sisters. In other words, it is schooling for self-reliance, not education for empowerment. The honourary male cannot be part of the women's struggle. She is part of the problem, not part of the solution.

It might be thought that, if this is the problem, then the solution should be reform of the formal school system in order to provide education for women´s empowerment. There is no space, in this short paper, to consider the difficulties of reforming the school system.

Suffice it to say that any attempt to divert the school from its present role (of inter-generational reproduction of patriarchy) will automatically attract firm and immediate opposition from the patriarchal establishment. Therefore, such reform can only be launched from a position of political power.

This of course reverses the argument. We began with a consideration of the proposition that women´s increased schooling can lead to women´s empowerment. Now we have argued towards a proposition which is nearly opposite: that first we need women´s empowerment, before schools can contribute towards women´s advancement.

B. Education for Women´s Empowerment

So if schools can provide only schooling for self-reliance, and for the reproduction of patriarchy, where can we find education for women´s empowerment? It is here that radical forms of gender training, summarized above, may prove instructive. Below are listed some of the more politically and ideologically oriented objectives which may be found within training for gender orientation of development programmes:

By the end of the training, participants should be able to:

- recognize gender issues in their own personal experience
- analyze gender issues
- identify discriminatory practices which stand in the way of gender equality
- identify underlying patriarchal interests and beliefs which legitimate discriminatory practices
- believe that gender discrimination is morally wrong
- recognize opposition to gender oriented policies
- identify specific forms of institutional resistance to policies of gender equality
- design strategies to counter political and bureaucratic opposition to gender policies
- suggest a sequence of collective action, as a means towards ending discriminatory practices, and overcoming patriarchal opposition.

The above list might strike the reader as rather strange - even unsettling! The list has two main ideological elements. Firstly it asks the participant to see the world in a different way. The participant is asked to identify gender inequalities and discrimination which were previously accepted as "natural" or "normal".

Secondly, the participant is asked to see gender discrimination as unjust and morally unacceptable. Further than that the participant is asked to become part of a programme of collective action to end these discriminatory practices.

In summary, participants are asked to put on new "spectacles" to see the world very differently, and to question what was previously found normal and acceptable. A prime purpose of such education is to make people dissatisfied with their present world. Perhaps this is the most basic aspect of all education for development: people cannot want to change the world unless they have become dissatisfied with it.

From the point of view of this present paper, we should notice one important overall point about the above list of educational objectives: they are just about opposite, at every point, to what is provided in formal schooling. Education for empowerment is opposite to schooling for self-reliance in that the participants learn to:

- think and work collectively with others, instead of working as an individual to compete against others;
- question the social and political environment, not merely as a ´given´ to be understood, but also as an unsatisfactory environment to be changed;
- look for the political interests which underlie apparently technical and "neutral" explanations;
- recognize that gender policies do not command political consensus, but in fact attract both explicit and covert opposition;
- question whether public institutions are working in the public interest;
- develop strategies for working in an area of political conflict and confrontation;
- devise strategies to counter covert bureaucratic resistance to gender oriented policies.

With our new "spectacles" we begin to see a different world. Patriarchy comes into focus! We begin to see all the things that the school concealed. To do this, we have to throw off most of the ideological and theoretical baggage that we increasingly had to drag through our years in school, and through life afterwards. Throwing away our school bags is essential for our liberation!

It is for this reason that women with less schooling are more open to education for empowerment. Women with less schooling are likely to have a clearer perception of the injustice of the gender division of labor. The nearer they are to the poverty line, the less they can protect themselves by exploiting the labor of women even more poor than themselves. Being unschooled, they cannot rise by becoming honourary males. Therefore the injustice of gender inequality stares them in the face, and affects them directly.

By contrast, women with more schooling are more indoctrinated into the school system. They have been schooled to believe in the value of schooling. They have been schooled to progress within the existing system, and not to change it. They have been schooled to believe that women get ahead by being schooled, and that women are less advanced than men because of lack of schooling. Women´s empowerment involves, as a pre-requisite, that women throw away this false ideological baggage, and join the sisterhood.

With education for empowerment, we may even be able to turn the honourary males, and the queen bees, into feminists! This transformation would be key to the subversion of patriarchal bureaucracy!

Women of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your school bags!

Endnote

1. Esther Boserup, 1970. *Women's Role in Economic Development*. St. Martin's Press, New York.

LITERACY PRACTICES AMONG ADULT WOMEN: An Attempt at Critical Conceptualization

Nelly P. Stromquist

This paper aims to depart from traditional defenses of literacy programs by calling attention to the uses of literacy skills that characterize neo-literate women and to the role of such uses in the development of both literacy habits and in the women´s wider understanding of the world around them.

The principles of Paulo Freire and popular education in general call for the promotion of literacy among disadvantaged populations so that they will gain "conscientization" and thus develop a critical understanding of the sociopolitical forces that determine their illiteracy. To this extent, literacy is held in high regard as one of the strongest mechanisms to mobilize individuals into political action and eventually transform social structures. Linked to conscientization is the promise of empowerment. While this concept has been subject to varying interpretations, the prevailing meaning defines empowered persons as those with a strong sense of self-esteem and able to see themselves as key actors in their process of emancipation or liberation.

For women, both conscientization and empowerment are crucial attributes of the path toward shedding oppressive identities and creating new ones. At the same time, acquisition of these attributes has been unrealistically assumed to be facilitated through the process of literacy.

There are few studies of the uses of literacy among adult learners. Most studies of reading and writing practices have focused on formal education and on younger children. There are even fewer studies that examine the uses of literacy from a political and transformative perspective. Drawing on my own research focusing on a popular education project in Sao Paulo, Brazil during 1991-94, I found that the distance between popular education rhetoric and actual accomplishments is wider than many of us are willing to admit (Stromquist, 1997).

The acquisition of literacy skills among adult women is difficult because most of these women are poor and exist within family contexts that demand their time, energy, and attention on a continuous basis. These forces affect their participation in literacy programs, with the result that the common pattern of attendance is one of irregular participation in classes, frequent tardiness, and inability to engage in literacy assignments back in their home. It would be a fair assessment to state that only a small percentage of adult women acquire a substantial degree of literacy skills through the literacy programs. These modest gains that characterized the majority of women literacy learners, it must be reiterated, are much more a function of the constraints in women´s lives than the poor design or implementation of a literacy program - even though these features also operate.

The focus of this paper, however, is not on the proportion of those who attain literacy skills, but rather on the practices in which the few women that have attained literacy engage. The Sao Paulo study found that being poor affected literacy practices in substantial ways. Primarily, two forces were at work: the still predominant oral nature of their worlds, and their access to printing materials.

The Dominance of Oral Communication in Poor People´s Lives

Illiterate women are usually married to men who are also illiterate or have low levels of education. Even though the children of these women may be in school and able to read and write, the family environment is one in which literacy skills - reading and writing - are seldom used, mostly in response to requests for information or in response to the provision of information by public institutions (the school, the municipality, the regional or national government, etc.). Most day-to-day communications are handled through oral messages and since households have several members, chances are that someone will be at home to convey the information to the intended person. The availability of public telephones in most cities enables people to communicate in detail and as needed through oral means. Finally, cultural norms such as unannounced visits of relatives and friends also increase reliance on oral communication as a means of conveyance of reliable and current information.

Oral cultures are even stronger in rural areas. Unlike the city, the environment of the countryside is often totally devoid of print. The absence of modern enterprises in rural regions has not introduced a demand for printed communication. In these settings, schools operate as islands for both the acquisition of and practice with literacy skills.

Types of Reading Materials

Poverty affects the low-income person´s availability for literacy classes. Poverty continues to extend its ugly grip when it comes to access to reading materials. The print available through the marketplace includes newspapers, magazines, professional journals, comic books, religious literature, advertisements, and books. These materials are more expensive in developing countries than in industrialized nations given the latter´s proximity to paper sources and more efficient printing technologies.

The neoliterates of Sao Paulo were found not to consume books, in part because they are too difficult for them and in part because they are expensive. Books that were read tended to be school textbooks from their children or religious books such as the Bible, whose stories have long been memorized and are revisited not as a source of information but primarily as a source of spiritual comfort and wisdom. Bibles were not given for free and represented an important expenditure for the neoliterates. On the other hand, Bibles constituted a continuous source of reading so in fact, unlike many other reading materials, they were "recycled." It is of interest to observe that a Kenyan study by Carron et al. (1989) also found that the Bible was the most popular reading book.

As a group, the Sao Paulo women reported reading some 14 magazines. These were read rather infrequently and were mostly borrowed from friends and relatives, which suggests that their reading habits are quite vulnerable to others´ ability to buy magazines. The women read women´s journals whenever possible, but since the costs of these journals were well over the women´s financial means, they relied on an informal network of friends to gain access. One of the women told be with great satisfaction that during her stay in a hospital she had been able to read many of them. Several women had access to comic books, which they consume with pleasure, through their children.

Newspapers were used relatively infrequently as sources of information about the community or the world. Some sensationalist papers, which were also cheaper than the more serious newspapers, were consumed occasionally because accompanying the text were large pictures of the event or persons depicted in the articles. A major use of newspaper reading was to locate employment; therefore, its reading seemed limited to periods of job search. The non-religious materials read by women concerned heavily gendered contents: fashions, beauty tips, lives of actors, cooking recipes. None of the women reported reading or being interested in reading articles of a critical nature vis-a-vis society.

The data from the Sao Paulo study is of special importance because they pertain to a highly urban setting, characterized by a rich, even overwhelming, print environment. The city has 12 daily newspapers, and 32 weekly, three bi-monthly, and eight monthly journals and magazines. This abundance of materials, however, is not easily available to low-income persons.

A comparison of costs involved in buying daily newspapers in Sao Paulo and San Francisco reveals, as one might suspect, that newspapers are much more expensive in Brazil. A calculation of wages earned by a poor Brazilian wage-earner (as literacy learners are, who on the average earn about $195 per month) in contrast with wages by a clerical worker in the U.S. showed that for the Brazilian neoliterate access to daily newspapers would represent 6 percent of her monthly wages in contrast with .08 percent of the monthly salary of the U.S. clerical worker (about $2,000). The journals the women occasionally read cost from $1.95 to $3.40 reals (1 real = US$ 1 at that time). Those are considerable expenses for persons whose monthly salary is below $200 reales.

A recent profile of "first-level learners for literacy" (a term that avoids labeling them illiterates) in the United States found that such people are most likely to be from racial or ethnic minorities, less likely to have a high school diploma, more likely to have incomes under $15,000 or be unemployed, and more likely to have a learning disability (Stites and Foley, 1996). This points to difficult social and economic conditions also among illiterates in the United States. However, their ability to buy newspapers, considering the $15,000 average wage per year, still places them in a more favorable condition than their Brazilian counterparts, as daily consumption of a newspaper would cost the U.S. neoliterate about 0.96 percent of her monthly wage.

Other uses of reading included the reading of advertisements, prices, and products in the stores. In several cases, this reading also covered the ingredients of products being sold in markets. Less frequent, but crucial, were reading uses concerning bus destinations and street names. Depending on public transportation and seeking jobs as maids on a constant basis, these new literacy skills brought ease and confidence to their lives.

Literacy skills pertaining to writing are also used infrequently. One of the most cited uses referred to the writing of notes for family members, notes in which the women indicated their whereabouts or gave instructions for specific tasks to their children. Use of these notes was reported by seven of the 19 women in my study. They represented a source of pride and accomplishment for the neoliterate women.

Literacy statistics invariably report higher levels of illiteracy among rural than among urban populations. An additional factor that operates in rural areas against the development of literacy practices - in addition to economic resources, the dominance of an oral culture, and the absence of a print environment - is the lack of time rural women face due the high demand placed on their labor as a consequence of low or absent domestic technologies and infrastructure, conditions clearly observed in the recent case of literacy outcomes in Namibia (see Lind. 1996).

The Substance of Reading

The reasoning behind the need of literacy for empowerment and political conscientization argues both explicitly and implicitly that literacy skills will promote the development of citizenship, i.e., an increased identity as members of the polity who are thus eager and willing to exert rights and make demands for a better and more just life. The assumption that literacy is needed to process information that will be more complex and vast than that to which people may have access through oral communication is not an issue. What is problematic is whether the content of the printed materials available to the neoliterates promotes the development of political awareness.

Of the 14 journals identified as reading sources by the women, half could be considered to contain topics for both men and women. The other seven are were feminine journals that concentrate in topics such as beauty advice, fashions, kitchen and home products, romance advice, and horoscope forecasts. Often, however, these journals include articles on the evils of alcohol consumption and advice on sexual and romantic practices such as condom use and even how to kiss. The content of these journals supports stereotypes of women as beautiful, seductive, and concerned exclusively with home affairs.

It is entirely understandable that low-income women may want to have access to the goods of the dominant classes and that they share some of the gender stereotypes about the ideal woman as slim, beautiful, and elegant regardless of social class. However, it must be observed that there is very little in the women's journals consumed that fosters a critical political understanding, let alone a political transformation. In fact, these magazines are not political at all, concentrating on the private world of women, reflected in topics about romance, intimate love life, domestic work, and relations with children and spouse. For reasons of social transformation, women need content that questions the conventional gender identities of women as lovers, mothers, and wives, yet the literature prevailing in the market place shapes women's identities as dependent beings. Discussion of issues that would help women define their own personal fulfillment independent of others, as citizens, and as autonomous workers, is simply absent.

The point in this description and analysis of literacy uses among the women in Sao Paulo is not to dissuade popular educators from engaging in literacy programs for marginalized adult women. The women's right to literacy should be seen as beyond discussion and both as a human right and a prerequisite for individual competitiveness in the labor market. What is being highlighted here is an area seldom addressed in popular education efforts, which is not the dreamed for literacy but the enacted --or practiced-- literacy.

Enacted literacy has features that reproduce the subordination of women by inducting them into the gendered world of the dominant press. Messages in popular magazines and newspapers seldom question the values of domesticity, motherhood, and obedience for women. These messages, on the contrary, present advice on how to engage in these roles in more efficient and satisfying ways. Likewise, the popular literature creates an imaginary world in which everybody has instant access to wealth, beauty, and happiness. The stories and messages embody much attractiveness due to their ability to transfer the reader to that imaginary and desirable reality. Little is found, therefore, in the dominant printed media that may introduce political awareness. The plights and struggles of workers and peasants, of the unemployed and the homeless, is not treated by popular magazines and newspapers. Beyond pictures and accounts of extreme cases, readers will find limited explanations of forces that produce poverty, destitution, exploitation, and marginalization.

A challenge to popular educators is to become fully cognizant of the potential for emancipation (or not) through the prevailing printing materials in the marketplace. Much too often it is easily assumed that literacy skills will result in positive political outcomes. Yet, the evidence--scant as it is--points to a different direction and presents a much more complex and challenging situation.

The provision of adult literacy programs tends to be more carefully done when delivered by NGOs. At the same time, NGOs are hard-pressed to find the resources they need for effective literacy programs. The scant financial resources available, tend --for good reason-- to be spent at the front end, in the acquisition of literacy skills. The problematic situation here is that the phase of post literacy is taken for granted. In other words, it is assumed that somehow the neoliterates will manage to write and read on a sustained basis.

The investigation of literacy uses among the 19 women in Sao Paulo deconstructed global and vague understanding of literacy habits. The knowledge derived from this study begs for a reconsideration of the frequent claims regarding the power of literacy. It also calls for a deeper and much more encompassing strategy to enable marginal adults to reach the possible rewards we now attach to literacy

The Reality of Empowerment

An unintended but certainly frequent outcome of participation in literacy programs is women´s increased sense of empowerment. How to explain these feelings in the absence of readings and even class discussions about the women´s political and social subordination?

Various definitions of empowerment exists. Let us define the attributes of empowerment as including a positive self-image, high levels of self-confidence, ability to think critically, and skills to build up group solidarity and promote collective decision making. Another useful definition is that proposed by Trueba and Zou as "conscious decision making to demand respect for one´s rights and to control one´s destiny" (1994).

One explanation for the empowerment of neoliterate women may be the public nature of the physical space they use during the literacy classes. This semi-public setting promotes friendly and informal exchanges among the participants and in doing so it validates women´s experiences and promotes modifications in the women´s gender identities. Even though some gender issues may not be addressed in the content of the literacy cases, being with other women of similar status and life experiences, enables the participants to reflect on their condition.

It seems that the experience of occupying semi-public spaces where they can exchange impressions about their lives permits the socialization (i.e., making public) of heretofore private pains and preoccupations. In collective settings, women learn to speak out loud, to express themselves, to recognize themselves in other women.

Reviewing the findings from the Sao Paulo study (Table 1), it can be seen that although the literacy applications are limited, the number of women who report positive and concrete feelings as a result of literacy participation is greater. Many of them report stronger literacy skills, greater confidence in speaking and dealing with others, less fear of making mistakes.

These manifestations do not reflect political empowerment, but they suggest a sense of greater self-esteem and assertiveness that are important features of empowerment.

Table 1. Feelings and Literacy Applications Reported by the Sao Paulo Women

Feelings	Literacy Applications
Better reading and writing (15)*	Leaves notes for children (7)
	Can read products and prices (6)
	Can read street signs (3)
Greater confidence (8)	Can travel further distances by bus (3)
Better speaking (6)	Helps children with homework (3)
Less inhibited (5)	Is more aware of print environment (3)
Not afraid of others (3)	Can read bus directions without help (2)
Less afraid of mistakes (2)	Has more communication with children´s teacher (2)
	Is trusted by others with their money (2)

Source: Stromquist, 1997.

The Namibia nationwide literacy campaign (in effect since 1992) also showed a substantial impact of literacy of a "social and psychological nature," which was attributed to the participants´ increased self-reliance in dealing with community institutions and to their enhanced ability to understand what "goes on around them, listen to the radio, and better understand information on such issues as health and politics" (Lind, 1996).

One attribute of innovative NGOs is that they create a space for women´s own voices to be heard through participatory processes of needs-identification or through organizational practices promoting participation in the decision agenda (Kabeer, 1994).

Some governments and international agencies have coopted the empowerment approach into their overall policy goals. In their usage, empowerment often means the integration of women into the market, emphasizing their self-reliance in food production. Nonetheless, few state agencies address empowerment in literacy programs for women. A notable exception is India´s Program of Action for the National Policy on Education (adopted in 1986).

CONCLUSION

Learning to read and write should mean applying written language to daily life, internalizing it, using it to communicate and to connect oneself to the surrounding society. As Schmelkes (1995, p. 137)observes "literacy is, therefore, functional or it is nothing at all."

Literacy offers a paradox: Reading and writing competence are advocated because they promise knowledge that can be obtained from other settings and time, and thus knowledge that can be obtained beyond the immediate context of the individuals. However, literacy skills themselves are highly context-dependent. Surrounding environments, prevailing oral cultures, and the extent of communication practices involving print affect the development of literacy.

Nothing can help reading skills as much as a reading environment and sustained reading practices. In particular, we have to consider more seriously the home situation in the process of literacy acquisition. Despite the importance of the development of literacy habits, literacy programs that support post-literacy practices are extremely scarce.

Linked to the need for post-literacy development is also the need for more research about literacy uses and practices. Flecha is quite correct when he observes that, "adult education is considered a humanitarian activity but not intellectually or scientifically grounded (1995, p. 191). We need to have more longitudinal case studies focusing on neoliterates as they go through their daily lives. We need also to have studies that profile better profile literacy learners in terms of their current literacy skills, their situation in the family and in the labor market to understand the interplay between literacy skills, literacy uses, and personal lives. This is a research challenge in which universities can help. As

Duke notes, we need "successful partnerships between university or institute-based researchers and field-based practitioners, leading to the direct, perhaps continuous, testing and application of findings" (1995, p. 201).

We need to be creative in the provision of strategies for postliteracy. One innovative vision involves the creation of "cultural centers" where people may come and experience various forms of cultural support, including reading. Speaking about indigenous populations in Latin America, Fischman and Hernandez (1995) recommend the creation of indigenous cultural centers, managed by indigenous representatives, with much attention paid to the process - not just the product - of social exchanges, in which individuals can have respect for self-determination and for their cultural practices. The modification of some of these cultural practices into less oppressive gender relations would have to be a strong consideration in these cultural centers. But the idea of creating public spaces beyond making them simple libraries is both appealing and promising.

We need to recognize that outcomes of an affective nature are extremely significant in the literacy experience, and they should be encouraged by multiple means. It stands to reason that parents who may not engage in literacy practices but who are more confident as a result of having increased their literacy skills may be more supportive of their children´s education, in turn making children´s literacy training more effective. At the same time, we cannot advocate literacy as a mechanism for political empowerment when both reading practices among marginal women tend to be weak and content tends to be overwhelmingly reproductive of current social relations of gender.

More effort should go - even within the currently available resources - toward making a reality of the political objectives of emancipatory literacy. This will involve developing greater understanding of effective pedagogical practices for adults in literacy programs, producing more critical reading materials, and perhaps subsidizing newspapers to lower their cost, making them more accessible to marginal populations or to cultural centers.

References

Carron, Gabriel, Kilemi Mwiria, and Gabriel Righy (1989). *The Functioning and Effects of the Kenyan Literacy Programme.* International Institute of Educational Planning: Paris

Duke, Chris. 1995 Some Future Agenda Items, *Adult Education and Development*, no. 45, pp. 199-201.

Fischman, Gustavo and Isabel Hernandez. 1995 Indigenous Movements, Ethnic Specificity, and Education in Latin America. In Carlos Torres (ed.), *Education and Social Change in Latin America.* Albert Park, James Nicholas Publishers: Australia, pp. 81-91.

Flecha, Ramon. 1995 Out of the Getto - A Communicative Perspective, *Adult Education and Development*, no. 45,pp. 189-197.

Kabeer, Naila. 1994 *Reversed Realities. Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought.* Verso: London

Lind, Agneta. 1996 *"Free to Speak Up." Overall Evaluation of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia.* Windhoek: Directorate of Adult Basic Education, Ministry of Basic Education and Culture.

Schmelkes, Sylvia. 1995 Latin American Research - Some Findings, *Adult Education and Development*, no. 45, pp. 131-143.

Stites, Regie and Ellen Foley. 1996 *Meeting the Needs of the Most Disadvantaged Adults: A Demographic Profile*, NCAL Connections, Fall p. 6.

Stromquist, Nelly. 1997 *Literacy for Citizenship. Gender and Grassroots Dynamics in Brazil.* State University of New York Press: Albany

Trueba, Henry and Yali Zou (eds.). 1994 *Power in Education. The Case of Miao University Students and its Significance for American Culture.* The Falmer Press: London

PARTICIPATION IN ADULT EDUCATION IN WESTERN COUNTRIES: The Women´s Perspective

Sofia Valdivielso

THE MICRO PERSPECTIVE

> *"The greatest treasure that exists in life is to read and understand what one is reading. This is the most beautiful gift there is. All my life I have wished to learn to read and write, because, to me, knowing how to do so meant freedom".*

This is the response that an illiterate woman gave me when I asked her why she had decided to take part in the literacy program for women in the Canary Islands. The wish had always been present in her as well as in other women, but never, until now in their fifties, had they the chance to finally do it. The reasons they had not participated before are complex, interwoven and interdependent.

I have wanted to learn to read and write, but never had the chance to do it. As a child when I was old enough for school I couldn´t go because there was no school in the area where we lived and also because I had to help my parents with the chores in the field. I have been working since I was eight years old. I was the eldest girl in a family of 7 brothers and sisters and so I had to help my mother. I have worked a lot. I have done nothing else but work all my life. We weren't short on food, that´s true enough, we lacked other things. I married when I was 20 and by the time I was 30 I already had six children. Between raising children and farm work, there was never time to study. Once I tried following a course broadcasted on the radio but I never understood what they were talking about so I dropped it. Then my children taught me a bit but they never had enough patience and I always got nervous because they would laugh at me so I dropped it again. My husband also laughed at me and said "you can´t teach an old donkey to read and write". So I have always had this burning drive to learn to read.

I didn´t know this place existed to teach people to read. A neighbor told me about it and she invited me to come along. It took me a long time to make up mind to come as I was ashamed that someone would gawk at me going to school at my age. But I came here and met other women like me who helped me a lot. Now I am not afraid to leave the house with the books in my hand and the others know that I am going to school. I am pleased and only wish I had done this before. My children are older now and they all encourage me to come but my husband doesn´t like the idea of it at all. He says I am thick and that I am incapable of learning anything. (Carmen 50 years)

If we analyze this testimony we may observe that there are numerous obstacles which keep illiterate women from participating. For Carmen there is no single reason which prevented her taking up the literacy courses. Her reasons involve time constraints and also the misinformation as well as her self-image. All these factors act simultaneously and it is the set of all of them that kept her from the literacy course.

Many of the women with whom I have worked with as a literacy instructor have shared more or less a similar story. They mention the problems that they had to overcome when they were taking their own children to school, or when they would take them to the doctor or give them the correct dose of medicine without committing errors. They were aware that the wrong dosage could be fatal. Although they may not have erred, the anxiety they felt faced with that possibility was overwhelming. The humiliation they felt in certain circumstances when they had to ask for assistance and they received the reply:

"Either you're thick or you are illiterate", which led them to feel ashamed of themselves.

These women have heard "illiterate" mistakenly equated with stupidity so many times in their lives that they end up believing it. Many of them arrive at the literacy courses convinced that they do not know anything, that they are ignorant, or uncouth. This negative stereotype is so rooted in them that it makes them think and feel that, at their age, they are no longer able to learn.

The feeling that they know nothing and therefore are worth nothing at times is so strong that some of the women I have met through my literacy classes confess that this feeling of uselessness drove them to the brink of suicide. They did not value their ability to care for their children, to handle the chores inside and outside of the home. This lack of esteem of their own work is reflected in the lack of social recognition women's work has traditionally received.

This way of thinking leads the women to assume a passive role in the literacy classes. They identify the literacy instructor as the bearer of all wisdom and consider themselves as devoid of any expertise. So they are ready to absorb whatever the teacher presents. Changing this situation takes a long time.

I began working as a literacy instructor in 1986 and my experience has passed through different stages. I first assumed the teacher transmitter role as it was what the students expected of me and in which, with little experience and no reflection on the subject, it felt comfortable. There was this idea of literacy as a technique which had to be transmitted to people who were lacking it, and an idea of culture as something static, linear and accumulative. My job was to transmit culture as it was already prepared. I saw literacy as a mere instrument which facilitated people's access to knowledge, to the abilities and skills necessary to function in current society. I also took on the assumption that considers the illiterate person as some sort of idiot unable to cope with reality. This led me to take on a protective role toward them and they responded by developing a dependent relationship towards me.

The learning process was linear: from the simplest to the most complex, the rhythm was slow and the number of course leavers after a few weeks was considerable. We all felt rather frustrated; they thought they were unable to learn and I felt I was not fit for the job and that the students did not understand me. The need to solve this conflict led me to consult different sources which support adult education and I became involved in the debate concerning how adults learn.

In 1990 I began working as a literacy instructor in a rural area of the island of Gran Canaria. Again the students took on a passive role and demanded that I act as a transmitter. I made the new classes traditional at first as I knew the process of breaking down preconceived notions of the students would take time. Gradually I began to challenge the stereotypes of the "cultured literacy" educators and the "uncultured illiterate".

One day, in reference to the word "tree", I was presented with the opportunity to break this assumption that I was all-knowing. I confessed to the students that I could not tell an apple from an almond tree unless a fruit was hanging from the branches. I explained that this was because I had been raised in an urban environment where there were no fruit trees. They could not believe this and the very next day we agreed to meet in the country beyond the classroom walls so they could show me the differences between the two trees.

The next day we visited a farm and they instantly became the teachers and I the pupil. I was amazed at the amount they knew about nature, about trees, animals, weather, etc. This made them aware of all the knowledge they possessed and how useful this knowledge was in the context in which they lived. They realized that the problems I would have if I were to live in this environment were comparable to the problems they would encounter if they were to move to the city.

At that point they understood they were capable of transmitting knowledge and their role in the class completely changed. They began to be more active, they gained self-esteem and the literacy process speeded up. They no longer looked at themselves as lacking in knowledge. On the contrary, they discovered that they knew many things, that they were able to read other codes, to make sense of other signs that I could not figure out because these signs did not occur in my cultural context.

This broke the barrier of the teacher actively transmitting to passive students. I had certain knowledge conditioned by my cultural context and they possessed another set of perceptions. From this point on a process of cultural interchange began, a mutual learning experience. They realized that their knowledge of their rural surroundings transmitted orally were just as important as mine which is based on written culture. Their cultural context and way of life were different from mine but no less valid and they came to see that learning to read and write would only broaden their vision of the world without denying their roots.

This transforming perceptions process was essentially an adult education model expressed by Mezirow involving the assignation of meaning to the reality around us, and subsequently to modify it. (Mezirow 1991)

In etymological terms, we may define a literate person as one who is familiar with the alphabet. The alphabet is a code, a set of signs, a command of which provides access to certain knowledge transmitted by it. So from a strictly historical perspective, being illiterate means that by not knowing this code, the signs themselves will not be understood. Reading involves decoding, giving meaning to that set of signs. The sign assumes meaning within the text and this is determined by the context.

In my opinion lack of knowledge of the alphabet does not mean a person is unable to read, for there are other codes which the illiterate are able to decode, to read, to understand, to assign meaning. These people may possess their own cultural codes not contained in elite culture.

When the traffic light turns red, I know I must stop, an arrow to the left indicates that I have to turn in that direction, a fork directs me to a restaurant, a furrowed brow implies concern, a tear, sadness, a burst of laughter, joy. The illiterate is able to decode and to read all of these signs. "The eye does not see things but figures of things which mean other things," writes Italo Calvino in his book "Invisible Cities" "The eye´s gaze scans the streets as it reads a pages: The city tells you everything you are to think, it makes you repeat its discourse, and while you believe you are visiting Tamara, you only check the names with which this place is defined." (Italo Calvino, 1981:22)

Discovering the strategies which the illiterate need to survive in a society which ignores them, is an enriching experience for anyone who works with illiterate people in their process of learning the written code. Within educated cultural circles the illiterate are described as those without information, without communicative capacity to solve problems for themselves and totally without culture.

These negative stereotypes "disregard the capabilities, dignity, strength, courage, dedication and love that I have experienced from the adults with whom I have been working." (Fingeret 1991).

Jenny Horsman reflects on the power of naming in the literacy process. How the women taking part in the literacy programs discover paths that allow them to change their lives. To illustrate this she tells the story of a woman, one of her students, "a survivor of a childhood full of abuse".

Directed by her tutor, and this tutor by a therapist, she came to realize how she had been a victim and not, how since her childhood had she created a feeling of guilt. This guilt stayed with her for years, she had no voice, because she was ashamed of her experience. By reading the stories of other women and recounting her own story she gained the confidence to name that which for many years had gone unnamed and this was exactly what fostered her transformation, which enabled her to put a meaning to her experience. (Horsman 1990)

As Freire put it in his conversations with Macedo "Reading does not only involve decoding the written word or language; it is an act preceded by and interwoven with an understanding of reality. Language and reality are dynamically interconnected. The comprehension achieved through critically reading a text implies perceiving the relation that exists between text and context." (P. Freire & D. Macedo 1989).

Interviewed in the journal **Support** (May 1990), Jack Mezirow addresses the question of how to establish a typology of illiteracy with the following statement: It is difficult. Literacy does not merely imply instrumental learning but also access to the assimilation of the identification process of the reality that surrounds us. We may establish a relation between instrumental learning and functional illiteracy but, how do we catalogue the concepts we have of democracy, of love...? How do we reach the conclusion that a person is capable of making decisions? All this is also literacy. The definition encompasses more than learning to read and write".

Participation in the classroom

Once the women overcome all the obstacles that prevent them from participating in the literacy course, a very difficult learning period begins, for the students as well as for me as their teacher.

One of the first problems they face is the command of fine motor skills. For a literate person properly holding a pencil is an easy task. We forget that it is something we learned at a very early age at school. For an illiterate person who has never used a pencil this process is highly complex. Given that the command of fine motor skills implies command of major muscles, the first exercises I do with my students involves the broad movement of the forms of the letters. It is quite surprising to note how difficult it is to reverse direction when crossing the axis of corporal symmetry. Once they have performed the broad exercises with the shoulder we begin to work with the medial muscles to ultimately arrive at the fingers and hands. Meanwhile we practice postural exercises such as sitting up straight, deep breathing, relaxation exercises of the neck muscles, shoulder, etc. Since I began doing these exercises I have noted how the women relax and learn to hold the pencil with appropriate pressure. This avoids muscular aches in their arms and back and encourages them to continue the learning process.

Concepts such as forward or back in space on the sheet of paper is another area which involves exercises. Projecting the direction in space of a sheet of paper is a process of learning which is far from automatic. Another basic daily exercise involves building up our memory. The reason for this is having proven how difficult it is to retain words that they read makes it very difficult to read for content.

In one of the initial sessions of this course, I read a dialogue between an illiterate woman and a journalist. The text is called "The word Lilies is as tall as it is long "by Marguerite Yourcenar. In this dialogue the illiterate woman tells of her difficulties in getting about in a big city like Paris. As I get further into the text I saw how my students totally identified with the situations which were being told. They interrupted my reading to say "that's right, that's happened to me too". They saw their lives reflected in the story of this woman and assimilated it as their own story. They understood the text immediately and this encouraged them to talk about their own experience. In a subsequent lesson I read another text whose structure was not in dialogue form. The protagonist again related her experience. As I got into the reading I realized that they were not following what I was reading. To my surprise they only recalled the first and last part of what was said but had forgotten the section in the middle. I began again sentence by sentence. When I finished a sentence I asked what I had just read. Their answers were always an interpretation but not what I had read. When I finally managed to get them to limit their remarks to what was being said in a certain sentence I found that the same thing happened again. They remembered the beginning and the end of the discussion but not the central section of it. I asked them if they had problems understanding news broadcasts on television and they all said they didn't understand it. The reason for not understanding, in my view was that the readers simply read text. It is not that they don't understand the words but rather that they use a structure of a written text, which is far from the narrative structure of the oral language.

Memorizing little poems, a series of colors and numbers fosters the literacy process. Transcribing their own stories and using them as reading texts also greatly facilitates the learning process and also transforms the learning process into a process of cultural production as advocated by Freire. (Freire & Macedo, 1989).

I would like to conclude this part by asserting that literacy can no longer be considered something that is simple and independent from the social, political, economic and cultural context the individuals are living in. In these new times the concept of literacy must be broadened. It is more than instrumental/functional literacy which deal more with a technical approach. It is also more then the critical approach of literacy which focuses on the social dimension of the individuals to transform society. Nowadays literacy should incorporate the emotional dimension. It means to discover oneself and to relate intimately with others in the world.

A number of skills, which have been subsumed under the term "emotional intelligence" by Coleman (Coleman,1996), are required in this new concept. Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity to relate with oneself and with others and the world, and it incorporates skills such the control of impulses, self-consciousness, motivation, enthusiasm, perseverance, empathy, etc. The lack of emotional intelligence impacts on the daily life of people, and it sometimes is the reason why people fail who, according to their IQ, dispose of all the favorable conditions for success. Emotional intelligence is linked with the capacity for projection and interjection, and these dimensions have been neglected by "traditional modernity" because it was considered to be exclusively part of the private sphere. Yet, today we are living in a moment where the private has become public, and even the emotional, which has been closed in the intimate sphere, has entered the public sphere

In view of these multiple meanings and varieties of literacy, it is more appropriate to refer to literacies than to a single unitary literacy, and to recognized literacies as a global phenomenon which affect all peoples at all backgrounds.

THE MACRO PERSPECTIVE

Yet the need to obtain macrofigures concerning the state of training of the population has led us to establish categories within this area. Thus we have, the statistical subgroups of the very well-trained, highly qualified at one end of the spectrum and unqualified at the other. The very use of these terms has a positive or negative effect. This implies seeing the problem from a dichotomous perspective, excluding and reducing. However, the reality is much more complex than the possession or lack of certain functional abilities. A single test provides us information that those tested know how to solve the different items presented. But the researchers who use these instruments commit, in my judgment, an important error in generalizing the data to the rest of the population. It is the use of this information which produces a bias in reality.

Based on data of a research study about the basic abilities of the US population, the following article appeared in the *New York Times* (20 September, 1993): ADDING UP THE UNDERSKILLED "A survey finds nearly half of US adults lack the literacy to cope with modern life.... After tabulating the test scores, ETS designated five different grades and projected that 42 million American Adults fall within the lowest category; 52 million fill the next rank, which is still below the level required to perform a moderately demanding job." Perhaps the worst news from the survey was the hubris expressed by those who were tested: when asked if they read well or very well, 71% of those in the bottom grade said yes.

If the ETS survey is accurate, the US is not only significantly populated by people unprepared for current and advancing technologies, but most of them do not know that they do not know."

This news article is only one example of the use of information. The extrapolation of the data to the general population leads to the affirmation that 42 million US citizens are in the lowest level of competence and worse still, that these same citizens are not aware that they belong in this category.

So if these people affirm that their command of reading and writing are adequate for their necessities and that their knowledge enables them to carry out their daily lives, why do the researchers insist on maintaining a contrary position? That 42% of the people interviewed were unable to correctly solve the problems posed does not mean they were incompetent, it only means that they were unable to answer these particular questions. That a person can not correctly interpret a credit card does not make that person functionally illiterate. Perhaps he is unable to use it because he has no use for it. The problem would only arise if that person were incapable of learning how to use it when he needs it.

If instead of the established questions in this study, others had been chosen, ones which were closer to the daily lives of the different social groups the results would have been very different. A series of abilities have been chosen which relate to the everyday experience of a particular social group, hegemony, which decides that these abilities are necessary for the rest. We have then a process of imposition and cultural colonization masquerading as the discourse of neutrality, of objectivity.

The problem with the lack of ability in some social sectors may only be understood if we consider its functioning from the inside and not distancing ourselves through the use of instruments considered objective simply because they fulfill the requirements of statistical validity.

Participation survey

The Adult Education Participation (AEP) study has been implemented in close collaboration with the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), (OECD&StatCan,1995) into which the instrument on adult education participation has been included as mandatory and had been inserted in the background questionnaire. It was undertaken in six Western countries: Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden, Poland and the USA.

In each country a probability sample was drawn from which data representative of the adult population between 16 and 66 years were derived. Some countries added a sub-sample representing older population. As the questionnaire used in each of the participating countries was the same, this allowed researchers for the first time to compare different countries taking part in the investigation (Bélanger & Valdivielso 1997).

The AEP study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the amplitude of the learning demand among the adult population in the countries surveyed?
- How many adults are involved every year in organized learning activities?
- Who participates to what kind of activities in what kind of context?
- What are the reasons to participate?
- Who finance and who provide adult education?
- Who do not participate and why?
- What are the similarities and differences among and between countries?

One of the first conclusions obtained in this study is that participation in educational activities in the set of participating countries is no longer an uncommon occurrence. In Table 1 we see that in all the countries, except Poland, more than a third of the adult population said they had taken part in some education or training activity during the period measured by the survey.

In all the countries, except Sweden, men participate slightly more than women although the differences are so small that at this level of analysis, no claim of sex discrimination can be made.

However, in analyzing the scarce differences in the participation rates of men and women, we must be careful. Beyond the data, at a second level of analysis, we can observe hidden but clear differences by gender. These differences appear more obvious when we look at provision, time to participate, obstacles to do so and reasons not to participate between men and women.

Briefly, the profile of the participant is that of a young person, male or female, mostly with a university degree, employed, with medium to high family income, with more opportunities to organize her/his own work and leisure time. She/he is a more frequent newspaper, book and magazine reader; theater, cinema or concert spectator; participates more in volunteers associations and devotes comparatively less time to television viewing than the general population.

The participation rate is closely linked to the level of formal education of the participants. Those who participate more in learning activities are also the ones that accumulate more "cultural capital".

Reasons to Participate

Comparing Tables 2 and 3, it is interesting to note that women tend to participate mostly for personal reasons, while men mention more frequently career or job related reasons. The first conclusion drawn from the data is that women are more interested in courses out of personal interest than for professional promotion. However this decision is determined, as Table 4 shows, by the support for participation women receive in the workplace. More women than men take part during their free time and furthermore must pay for the courses themselves. The reasons for participating vary among women based on their educational level and their professional status. In the Canary Islands the reasons for participation of illiterate women are very different from the reasons expressed by professional women. The latter generally give their motives as being related to their work or profession.

Financing

The first source of financing participation in adult education is self-financing or financing by the family. However, in all countries, companies finance more men than women. For instance, in the Netherlands men get twice as much financial support from their companies than women.

Providers

Companies are everywhere important providers, followed by commercial organizations, colleges and universities. Yet companies are not offering the same participation opportunities to women and men. We can conclude that the different participation patterns and rates by men and women are not due to the lack of motivation or interest of women, but to the scarce provision and the difficulties for their participation within work context (Table 5).

Reasons not to participate

The first reason for not participating given both by men and women is the lack of time. The second reason for men is the lack of provision. Family responsibilities take the fourth or the fifth place for men, while they are in some countries the second reason for not participating among women (Tables 6 and 7) .

The massive incorporation of women into the labour market is producing a deep change in the family context. However, the tendency towards dialoguing democracy and symmetric relations within the family does not reach every women in western countries because family responsibilities is a more important barrier to participate among women than among men. There are many women that establish their relations based on their autonomy, but there is equally a great number of women who still assume traditional roles. The archetype of the traditional mother continues to condition the life of many women who, despite enjoying economic independence, are still considerably impacted by the traditional roles. The fact of having economic independence does not mean that women also have personal autonomy. Many women have to struggle against these contradictions, and therefore they are participating in courses to enhance their self confidence, autonomy and way of solving communication problems.

Channels of Information

Regarding information sources concerning courses offered, more women than men say they have found out through relatives or friends and neighbors. Analyzing these data in the Canary Islands and crossing this response with education levels and with professional status we see that the informal means of communication of friends and family is practically the only source of information for women with the lowest levels of education and for housewives. The educated and highly paid professionals tend to get their information through other means such as the media or business publications.

From the data, it is clear that women have more difficulties when they want to participate. However there are also differences among women: those women with higher income and educational levels participate more than those who do not share these characteristics. Being a woman is not a static concept. This is significant for the dialectical relationship between herself and the context in which she is immersed, between herself and the environment.

The quantitative methodology provides us with a more or less precise picture of the reality we are trying to measure. However the picture is rather static. The quantitative data analysis indicates that illiterate women take part less than literate women, that the reasons for not participating of all the women is related to lack of time in the first instance or family responsibilities in the second or third instance. However, these data are unable to provide the nuances, the human story behind each of the percentages.

CONCLUSION

By starting this paper with the sharing of my experiences as a literacy teacher, I wanted to show the importance of starting from the stories of the women....stories which are often neglected yet critical in understanding the background and situation of women. As numbers are prioritized, the macro perspective becomes the dominant discourse and the life stories of women (micro perspective) forgotten. In my work as a literacy teacher and researcher, I realize that it is important that one is able to examine both levels...otherwise the picture we paint of reality is rather limited.

References

Belanger, P and S.Valdivielso. 1997. *The Emergence of Learning Societies:Who participates in Adult Learning*. Pergamon Press: Oxford

Calvino, I. 1981. *Las Ciudades Invisiblies*. Minotauro:Madrid

Fingeret. H. 1991. *Literacy in the USA: The Present Issues.* Paper presented at the Seminar on Adult Literacy in Industrialzed Countries in Hamburg. UIE Report No. 9.

Freire, P and D. Macedo. 1989. *Alfabetization. Lectura de la Palabra y Lectura de la Realidad. Madrid*: Paidos-MEC.

Giddens, A. 1992. *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies.* Polity Press: Cambridge

Horsman, J. 1990 *Somethings in my Mind besides the Everyday.* Women´s Press: Canada

Mezirow, K. 1991. *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

OECD and Statistic Canada. 1995. *Literacy, Economy and Society. Results of the First International Adult Literacy Survey.*

Valdvielso, S. And G. Rodriguez. 1995 *La Participacion de las Personas Adultas en Educacion y Formacion en Canarias.* Consejeria de Educacion, Cultura y Deportes del Gobierno Autonomo de Canarias.

Table 1. Participation rate by gender

	Canada n= 4417	Swit.Gr n= 1263	Swit.Fr n= 1296	USA n= 2668	NL n= 2566	SW n= 2123	PL n= 2668
Male	39.5	45.9	38.1	41.6	39.6	51.4	15.4
Female	37.9	44.2	29.7	40.5	35.8	55.4	12.6
Total	38.6	45.0	33..9	41.0	37.7	53.3	14.0

Table 2. Percentage by Gender given Career Interest as Reason to Participate

	Can	Swit.Gr.	Swit.Fr	USA	NL	SW	PL
Male	89.2	70.4	72.8	90.8	74.8	38.2*	78.9
Female	69.1	47.8	54.6	84.7	51.5	39.5*	71.7
Total	79.2	58.9	64.4	87.6	64.3	38.9	75.6

Table 3 . Percentage by Gender given Personal Interest as Reason to Participate

	Can	Swit.Gr	Swit.Fr	USA	NL	SW	PL
Male	9.1	26.2	26.4	6.1	15.6	49.2	15.7*
Female	28.5	50.7	43.3	11.9	43.6	48.7	25.7*
Total	18.7	38.6	34.2	9.1	28.1	48.9	20.2
n	2844	905	670	1910	1456	373	497

* number of cases less than 100

Table 4. Financial sources by Gender and by Country

	Can n= 2848	Swit.Gr n= 920	Swit.Fr n= 670	USA n=1910	NL n= 1454	PL n= 484
Self/fami	T 41.2 M 38.8 F 43.8	T 52.1 M 42.5 F 61.4	T 46.6 M 38.1 F 56.6	T 31.5 M 28.9 F 33.8	T 39.7 M 27.1 F 55.2	T 30.9 M 27.0 F 35.5
Employer	T 45.2 M 49.9 F 40.3	T 42 M 53 F 32	T 45.7 M 51.6 F 38.8	T 60.7 M 65.8 F 56.0	T 51.2 M 64.3 F 35.0	T 59.5 M 64.5 F 53.7
Govern.	T 19.5 M 16.4 F 22.7	T 14 M 13 F 14	T 12.6 M 14.0 F 10.9	T 9.0* M 9.5 F 8.5	T 9.5 M 9.5 F 9.4	T 5.4** M 4.7 F 6.3

T= Total M= Male F= Female

*number of cases less than 100

** number of cases less than 20

Table 5. Providers

	Canada	Swit.Gr.	Swit. Fr.	USA	NL	PL
University/ higher edu.	M 16.5 F 10.8 T 13.7	12.5 8.6 10.7	20.1 14.7 17.7	25.8 27.8 26.8	12.4 11.4 12.0	6.2 11.7 8.8
Further educ college	M 17.7 F 14.1 T 15.9			4,7 6.7 5.8	12.1 18.4 14.9	19.3 13.9 16.8
Commer. org.	M 15.2 F 14.5 T 19.4	17.1 27.0 22.0	13.8 23,5 18.2	19.9 15.3 17.5	23.1 20.2 21.8	17.7 23.0 20.1
Producer equipment	M 8.7 F 5.0 T 6.9	9.2 5.9 7.7	8.8 5.0 7.1	8.9 5.6 7.2	5.2 0.8 3.3	6.9 2.0 4.6
Non.profit org.	M 8.6 F 14.6 T 11.6	14.3 17.4 15.8	18.3 13.4 16.1	12.1 7.5 9.7	2.0 8.8 5.0	8.3 10.1 9.1
Employer	M 29.8 F 28.8 T 29.3	30.7 19.8 25.7	30.4 25.7 28.3	28.5 30.9 29.8	26.1 19.1 23.0	22,5 20.7 21.7
Other	M 7.4 F 17.8 T 12.5	68.0 77.0 72.7	62.2 71.7 66.5	8.6 12.4 10.6	20.2 22.4 21.2	28.8 22.3 25.8

percentages based on the total of responses.

Table 6. Reason Not to Participate in Job Related Courses (yes only)

	Canada	Swit.Gr	Swit.Fr.	USA	NL	PL
Too busy	M 45.0 F 43.9 T 44.5	47.1 41.1 44.2	42.3 38.0 40.2	48.7 41.8 45.0	47.4 41.4 44.6	39.0* 28.6* 34.3*
Too busy at work	M 13.4 F 10.8 T 12.1	16.3 12.6 14.7	23.5*** 10.0*** 16.8***	19.8 14.4 16.8	15.6** 7.2** 11.9**	18.8 11.6 15.5
Course not offered	M 12.7*** F 5.8*** T 9.3***	12.0 16.9 14.4	8.8 11.8 10.3	3.8 5.3 4.6	6.2 7.6 6.9	14.7 14.5 14.6
Family responsibilities	M 13.5*** F 23.0*** T 18.1***	3.5*** 12.2*** 10.9***	3.2*** 16.2*** 9.6***	6.2*** 28.7*** 18.4***	3.1** 9.8** 6.2**	10.3*** 26.8*** 17.9***
Too expensive	M 24.9*** F 38.9*** T 31.7***	6.8*** 21.2*** 13.2***	18.1 20.6 19.3	32.3 34.4 33.4	16.1 20.0 17.9	27.6 35.3 31.2
Lack of employer support	M 5.2*** F 2.1*** T 3.7***	6.2 6.2 6.2	7.9 7.8 7.8	7.0 5.5 6.2	9.4** 3.4** 6.6**	10.4 12.6 11.4
Other	M 16.0*** F 9.5*** T 12.9***	23.3* 13.3* 12.5*	14.9 14.7 14.8	9.2 8.1 8.6	11.1 13.9 12.4	21.6** 9.2** 15.9**

Table 7. Reasons not to Participate in non-Job related courses (yes only)

	Canada	Swit.Gr.	Swit.Fr.	USA	NL	PL
Too busy	M 67.2** F 60.3** T 62.9**	62.4* 57.2* 62.1*	64.6*** 47.9*** 55.2***	61.4 59.4 60.1	67.8 63.5 65.4	53.6 44.2 48.6
Too busy at work	M 14.1 F 16.7 T 15.7	27.0 20.4 23.3	27.3*** 14.1*** 19.9***	24.4*** 11.8*** 16.2***	6.7 7.3 7.1	20.6 12.3 16.1
Course not offered	M 6.8*** F 3.0*** T 4.4***	2.1 5.3 3.9	4.7 6.2 5.5	4.5* 1.4* 2.5*	3.6 2.9 3.2	10.4 16.2 13.8
Family responsibilities	M 9.4*** F 18.1*** T 14.7***	5.2*** 12.5*** 12.9***	8.0*** 18.3*** 13.8***	7.5*** 21.3*** 16.4***	3.2*** 12.3*** 8.4***	11.6* 22.8* 17.8*
Too expensive	M 22.1 F 21.5 T 21.7	6.2 10.0 8.3	9.8*** 21.3*** 19.2***	22.5 27.1 25.4	15.2 17.4 16.5	40.4 36.6 38.3
Other	M 6.7 F 6.0 T 6.3	9.7 10.7 10.3	12.0 12.8 12.4	6.3 3.2 4.3	12.1 10.7 11.3	13.0 14.1 13.6

*** = p less .001 ** = p less .01 * = p less .05 nothing=not significant

DEVELOPMENT, ADULT LEARNING AND WOMEN

Renuka Mishra

The statement - Development and Education are interlinked processes - is a self-evident one. Both are transformative processes. Processes of change. Education is traditionally perceived as a tool to combat poverty and social inequalities. For women, education holds several promises- equitable participation in development processes, greater bargaining-power within the family and a more substantial role in decision-making, within and outside the family. Development and technological advancement creates a demand for literacy and education. It should follow that in practice too, education and development interventions will be closely planned and implemented.

Yet, a recent seminar[1] on issues related to survival and adult education in South and South-East Asia, revealed that the association was less obvious. Most of the participants were involved in a variety of grass-roots development projects. And were to our mind (as organizers), engaged in work that incorporated adult education and learning as well. The participants however, did not (initially at least), "see" themselves as "adult educators". Some expressed surprise at having been invited to a seminar being organized by institutions "formally" working on adult education.

These perceptions proved interesting for many reasons. It emphasized the point that adult education, for the most part, remains outside discourses of development - at least the kind of "development" grassroots groups were engaged in. It continues to be associated with classrooms, literacy primers and learning specific skills. The discussions at the seminar allowed us, organizers and participants alike, to re-examine the experiences presented in new ways. Especially from the perspective of establishing connections between development and adult learning - which obviously were not (in the first instance) such self-evident connections.

This paper draws on the work of two NGOs presented at this seminar and illustrates the importance of: Making linkages between development and education if women and marginalized groups are to be empowered; involving the community in determining learning and development needs; building people's organizations to sustain them; and above all expanding the scope of adult education.

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION: THE CHANGING DISCOURSE

Redressing women's marginalization in Development

Despite the changing rhetoric, both development and education, have marginalized women. Women have not merely been excluded. A division of labour that emphasizes women's reproductive roles, has accentuated and reinforced gender-subordination - culturally and economically. In development circles, this was first emphasized in the seventies when two trends became evident. One, that rapid economic growth would not "trickle down" to improve the living standards of the poor. And two, that more women were poor than men. Feminists asserted that women's economic roles (domestic and market) must be recognized, households could not be regarded as undifferentiated units where the interests and needs of different members (men and women) were in harmony, and finally that women's participation in economic activities and access to resources had to increase. The fall-outs at a policy level were that basic needs were prioritized and there was a call to integrate women into the development process. Women were to be seen as active participants and not passive recipients of development largesse. It was felt that education and training would help women integrate, participate more effectively and provide them greater and more equal opportunities for self-development.

Questioning Development

These policy shifts in mainstream development discourse did not question the development process itself. But there were dissenting, alternative voices. Third World women's networks (for instance DAWN[2]), demanding structural changes in economic processes gathered strength. Meanwhile, Freire's "conscientization" approach re-defined literacy and education as a political act - one that enabled critical reflection, emancipated rather than domesticated the poor. This revolutionized the discourse on education. That literacy and education should not merely integrate the poor, but transform the system, caught the imagination of a number of progressive groups across the world. And the "conscientization" or "transformatory" approach, was gradually adopted by other marginalized groups, including women's organizations. Although some women´s groups looked at it critically as gender was not a concern that Freire addressed specifically.

Market-led Economic Growth and Women

Despite the dissent and strongly articulated alternatives, as more and more developing countries found themselves caught in the debt-trap, the 80's saw a shift in macro-economic policies. Promoted by powerful international financial institutions, liberalization, globalization and market-led economic growth became the economic mantras of the 80's and 90's. Though these policies have resulted in unprecedented growth for a number of countries, particularly in South East Asia, it is well documented that growth has come at a price. These costs of development - ecological destruction, increased polarization between classes and gender, displacement, retrenchment, and the growth of sex-tourism (to enumerate a few) - are generally written off against the benefits of growth. It is also argued that such costs can easily be minimized by providing effective safety nets and opportunities for self-improvement, skills up-gradation etc. through education and training.

At one level, it would appear that market-led growth has met the feminist demands of recognizing women's productive capacity. Women are now recognized as key agents in economic development, the new micro entrepreneurs, the "nimble fingers" the export success of global market factories. The earlier equation between women and welfare has been challenged[3] . At another level, however, greater commercialization has led to a decreased access to resources. Women are still employed in the least remunerative jobs. And they are the first to be fired.

In the 90's, women continue to be marginalized and poverty feminized. Moreover, this acknowledgement of women's productive capacity is conveniently timed - it fits perfectly with the concern for efficient allocation of resources in the market-led economic scenario. Keeping women out of development is not efficient and does not make economic sense. It also coincides, not unintentionally, with various Structural Adjustment Programmes and cuts in social sector expenditure. Shifting the responsibility of welfare from the paid to unpaid economy is at odds with feminist demands. It intensifies women's work load.

And the focus on the market works as a vicious cycle for women in the long run, who unable to pay for support services in the market, are eventually unable to fulfil their economic potential as well.

Empowerment - a response from the grassroots

As market-led economic policies are now irreversible in a number of South and South-East Asian countries, development activists have gradually faced the realization that critical reflection alone cannot change the material realities of the poor. An alternative approach to development that has emerged from the grassroots experiences is the concept of empowerment. By problematizing the notion of power, empowerment, combines transformatory elements of the conscientization approach, and addresses the more practical aspects of skills training, access to resources, information etc. Marking a departure from earlier transformatory approaches, most empowerment initiatives, try and effect change at an individual and community level rather than a macro- systemic level alone (though they certainly do not preclude the latter). For women, the empowerment model, has been able to provide space to meet both womens"practical and strategic needs and interests. Along with the tangible/practical aspects like access to income, credit, markets, resources etc., intangible/strategic concerns of raising self-esteem, critical awareness, improving women's status, developing leadership and decision making qualities are now recognized as being of crucial importance.

Knowledge and Development

Another important shift in the field of development has been re-defining basic needs and survival. Basic needs have increasingly been applied to broader range of questions. Besides food, clothing, shelter and livelihood, issues of community, identity, culture and knowledge systems are also recognized as survival issues. More so because the growing evidence shows that globalization and rapid industrialization have had profound non-economic fall-outs. Communities now struggle not just for material and physical subsistence, but for the survival of their traditional knowledge, language and culture which affect the self-esteem of communities. It is widely acknowledged (particularly in the social sciences and gender studies) that along with the promotion of particular development policies, power is also associated with the promotion and validation of particular world-views, kinds of knowledge and ways of knowing.

Empowering education

For education to be empowering it must be seen as a process which equips individuals and communities with knowledge and skills to negotiate an unequal world from a position of strength and confidence. It should address itself to both the economic and cultural aspects of development, the tangible and the intangible. It should provide people with greater choices, build on their experiential knowledge base, and empower them to think critically on their life situation and act to change it. However, recognizing the transformative potential of education and the need for relevant education, is one thing. It is quite another matter to actually translate this into practice. And though the concept of women's empowerment has gained popularity, the kind of education described above is practised by very few groups. The mainstream approach to education remains instrumental. For most state-run programmes, and several NGOs as well, education continues to be defined by women's reproductive roles - reducing the fertility, improving child rearing practices, enhancing the nutritional status of the household. And at another level, devising new techniques, pedagogic tools and incorporating technological advancements into education work takes precedence over the content of education.

The two case studies discussed below demonstrate precisely how this need not be the case. One case study (Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan) is from India, a country with low literacy levels, poor human development indicators which has recently adopted liberalization policies; and the other (PACOS) is from Malaysia, a country with relatively high literacy rates, good human development indicators and an experience of rapid growth due to liberalization. Despite the obvious differences, the case studies show that when it comes to marginalized groups, there are certain commonalities in approaches and strategies that cut across national borders.[4]

BRINGING TOGETHER DEVELOPMENT AND ADULT LEARNING: EXAMPLES FROM THE FIELD

About the Organizations

Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, Kutch District (Gujarat), India

Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS) is a rural women's organization working in Kutch, a coastal district on the Western tip of India. As a result of poor rainfall, aridity and drought conditions, land in Kutch is of poor quality and largely uncultivable. The fragile eco-system of Kutch has gradually been degraded. Water is scarce, the soil and ground water is increasingly becoming more saline and grasslands are being destroyed. The impact on traditional livelihoods, such as pastoralism, has been considerable.

As in most arid and semi-arid regions of the world, Kachchi women, bear the brunt of the consequences of ecological degradation. Work-loads have increased- not only to meet survival tasks of water, fuel and fodder collection, but by the pressure to earn cash income for the family. In Kutch this has meant that women, who traditionally have skills in embroidery and handicrafts, have been forced to produce for the market. This shift from a non-commercial activity to one geared entirely to market production is fraught with problems typical of most home-based putting-out systems of work. The exploitative nature of the work is evident both in terms of the wage regime (usually piece rate) and of working conditions (poor light etc). Besides women, girls, often as young as 4-5 years, are drawn into handicrafts work. Middlemen dominate the market. Women have no control over the crafts they produce or means of production. The rapid expansion of the domestic and export market of handicrafts from Gujarat, has created a glut in the market, depressing prices and wages.

While this scenario typifies the situation of lower-caste Hindus and Muslims, upper caste Hindu and Muslim women face a different set of circumstances. While obviously not insulated against the droughts, water scarcity and domestic work, *purdah* and other restrictive social customs segregate them from the world outside. For them, working outside the home is unheard of. Some are not even allowed to fetch water from the village well. Their dependence on men to mediate "external" interactions is almost total. Often their rudimentary literacy skills (many have a few years of primary schooling) are the only means of"travel"outside the home. Incidence of domestic violence, unnatural deaths and suicides among the women in this caste-strata is high.

The two groups of women stand at opposite ends of a spectrum. Concerns and problems vary, but there are commonalities. KMVS works with both groups of women.

Their mandate is to empower rural women through education and skill building to enable them to manage economic activities and their own organizational structures. Central to KMVS's philosophy is setting up institutional networks at different levels that facilitate women's participation in development activities and organization building from the grassroots level upwards.[5] Education and empowerment initiatives are not introduced in a vacuum. They are linked to issues of relevance to women - craft production, reproductive health, legal rights, credit needs and natural resources.

PACOS, Dalit (Sabah), Malaysia

PACOS, is a non-profit organization working with indigenous communities in Sabah, on the north-eastern tip of the island of Borneo. Both Sabah and Sarawak (another state) are significantly different from the Peninsular Malaysian states in terms of historical development, ethnic composition and land area. A majority (72 %) of Sabah's population is made up of different indigenous ethnic groups. Sabah is rich in natural resources- petroleum, timber, palm oil and cocoa beans.

While the supply of raw materials from Sabah has fuelled Malaysia's growing export trade and rapid industrial growth, the people of Sabah have reaped none of the fruits of development. Sabah has one of the highest poverty rates in the country (22.6%) compared to the country average of 8.9 % . There is thus a net outflow of resources from Sabah to West Malaysia - benefitting a narrow segment of society and exacerbating inequalities. But environmental devastation and dispossession from their land is of much graver concern for the ethnic majority. Large tracts of land and forests have been taken over by logging companies, plantations, industries and large infra-structural projects. These are owned predominantly by private and multi-national companies, but also by government agencies. Traditional livelihoods are being rapidly eroded, forcing indigenous people to take on uncertain, low-paid jobs in timber camps and saw-mills.

The cultural dimensions of this kind of development are in many ways even more devastating. The traditional belief and knowledge systems of the indigenous people are closely linked to the forest and land. An important feature of those traditions is a belief in spirits, which dwell in all living things and guides their daily lives. Land, therefore, provides not only material needs, but is also the dwelling place of spirits, the burial place of ancestors and the storehouse of knowledge and culture. It is not a commodity to be bought and sold. The indigenous system of *adat*, or the body of unwritten customary laws, ensures harmony and continuity in the community, balance between people and nature the fruit of centuries of tradition and experience [6].

The traditional land tenure system has been replaced by modern land laws and policies. Rights to land are now based on a documentary title and owned by the State. Even the limited protection provided to Native Customary Rights is only on paper. In reality the land laws act in favour of state and private enterprise. As a result, the balance between people and nature has been rocked. Women, who are the spiritualists, healers and mid-wives and repositories of indigenous knowledge and oral traditions of their communities, no longer command the respect they did earlier.

PACOS assists local communities (mainly the Murut Pulan in the Dalit area) to assert their rights over their customary land and revive indigenous systems of knowledge and belief. To do this they build people's organizations, train local leaders and teachers to ensure their participation in the decision-making processes. Development, PACOS believes, should uphold the rights - individual and community and maintain a harmonious co-existence between people and the environment through the sustainable use of resources.

ADULT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT : ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

Learning to reflect and analyse

Most poverty alleviation programmes seek to provide basic needs to the community they are "targeting". This is done in a variety of ways - providing direct services, improving the entitlement of the poor to resources[7]. Education programmes are similarly designed- to provide specific literacy and numeracy skills. Of crucial importance therefore in designing, planning and implementing development projects is to identify and prioritize needs. It is now widely recognized that needs identification is not a neutral process. The two case studies will demonstrate that- who determines needs, for whom, what needs are prioritized- are not just important planning and project design tools, but a crucial adult learning strategy.

Identifying needs

The first phase of KMVS's work was an"initiation period" for the organizers and women alike. For the former, it was an initiation to understanding the struggles, life-patterns and issues of rural Kutch. And for the latter, it was the genesis of entering new relationships, new forms of communication (meetings, discussions etc.) and a new identity. Needs, in this process, were not instantly identified. Regular village meetings were held. This helped build a relationship of trust with the women and community. The women were most eager to talk about embroidery work - their situation as piece-rate workers (which involved a process of tracing the evolution of the problem) or relationship with the middleman (who often happened to be an influential male member of the extended family). In time related issues - the impact of ecological degradation on health and lack of education especially of women and girls - were discussed.

Gradually these discussions helped women concretize and spell- out their needs. They required credit to buy raw materials - an area that middlemen control. They needed a collective work-space to meet and organize themselves outside the home. To improve their economic position they had to understand the market. They also wanted to establish their identity as artisans - to be recognized as producers. They felt their work was undervalued because it was seen as an extension of their domestic work.

PACOS, too, did not start their organizing work by addressing the question of basic needs directly. For six months they lived and interacted closely with the community. Initially, they went from house-to house and later organized community level meetings. This process enabled the most pressing issues to be identified- loss of land rights, deforestation, the entry of plantations and logging companies.

While there was no hesitation in identifying "needs", PACOS realized that they could not take on such a complex issue head on. The community did not speak in one voice. The traditional leaders who were respected authority figures, often had a vested interest in seeing that multi-nationals came into the area. Challenging them would be a difficult task. Ground work needed to be done. Potential community leaders, especially women were identified at this stage. Building women's confidence, to say, speak at a large gathering, particularly before male traditional leaders, required time and many hurdles needed to be crossed.

In the experiences of both groups, formal education and conventional literacy interventions, were not the most pressing concerns of the people. Nor for that matter did they want a particular service provided. In the KMVS case, while the women were keen on tangible basic needs like credit, work space, etc., they were equally keen to improve their status as workers. In the PACOS case, the need clearly was to assert their rights over land and other resources and to develop them. This meant working on the intangible aspects of learning. It pointed to the inter-dependency between different needs. Peoples' lives are not neatly compartmentalized. Issues as complex as gender, poverty and education cannot be dealt with through a single strategy or a by providing a single input.

It also showed that this process, for both organizations, was not simply a"needs identification" exercise but a learning process. The content of learning in this exercise was to look at their reality critically, reflect on it, articulate needs and look at their problems in new ways. They no longer just experienced the problem. The organizers created the learning environment by providing a space for women to analyse and articulate their real needs, facilitating the discussions and providing information which gave a structure to the learning process.

Unplanned interventions

Besides, learning to reflect and analyse through planned activities, two examples from the KMVS case study, will show how unplanned interventions - episodes or events that occur without prior planning while mobilizing and organizing the community - can be turned into learning events. Reflection and analysis are critical to this process as well.

As the women got access to new information and grew in confidence, they decided to venture out of their cocooned"female"world of handicrafts. They decided to initiate an experimental water harvesting programme in one of the *mahila mandal* villages. Trainings and meetings on accounts management and other technical aspects were taken up with the group. For the women of that area, the activity was path-breaking. They were entering a male domain. The women demanded information -particularly on land- that had been exclusively their preserve. Every meeting meant negotiating with men. However, the women's desire for more information and to move to newer areas of decision-making created a backlash from the vested interests in the village. The *mahila mandal* was dragged to court with a false charge of land transgression. This the women were not yet ready to face. They were still learning how to use the power of information, resources and skill, but this education had not yet prepared them to actually confront and fight powerful forces in different forums.

In another instance, one of the *sangatha*ns took up the issue of domestic violence. They informed themselves about relevant laws. Armed with this information they intervened in a case where a lower-caste mandal member was being physically abused by her husband. The group decided to step-in. They took the woman away from her husband's home to her maternal home 80 kilometres away. They also filed a case against her husband on her behalf. This infuriated the men and village elders. Not only had their upper-caste women crossed the village boundaries without permission, but had had the audacity to visit the home of a lower-caste. A meeting of village elders culminated in an "order" being passed - none of the women could hereafter leave the village or attend the *mahila mandal*. KMVS was forced to withdraw the *mahila mandal* from that village. In this instance too, the women were confident, acted as a collective, had assimilated some information well, but had yet to learn to strategize or use the information effectively.

Both these episodes forced the women to confront gender issues head-on. As the interventions had important ramifications on the organization they became the basis for analysis and reflection. What went wrong and why? What were the possible alternative strategies? The group realized they needed a deeper understanding of gender relations. These incidents became learning events for the other *sangathan* members as well.

LEARNING THROUGH PLANNED OR STRUCTURED INTERVENTIONS

In the above examples, reflection and analysis, as a learning strategy, is illustrated in the context of needs identification and unplanned interventions. However, this is a learning process that is an on-going one and is integral to structured interventions which pertain to the more tangible aspects of learning.

Learning to mobilize, strategize and negotiate with institutions of power

The above examples revealed that the women required skills in negotiating and strategizing. Developing these skills over time is critical to development work that seeks to empower. In the KMVS case, the demand for a collective work-space for the craftswomen, meant planning a range of structured learning interventions. For instance, as a first step, the women had to meet land revenue officials to apply for land. This meant prior preparation. The group had to understand government land classification systems, grasp the process of submitting the application and most importantly, evolve strategies to access and deal effectively with local bureaucrats. Dealing with men, who wielded power, was an ability women needed to master. Even the practical aspects - hiring labour, managing weekly accounts monitoring construction work - require women to be able to negotiate.

Similar skills (strategizing and mobilizing), were learnt while organizing the campaign to make the work of craftswomen visible. The women demanded that they be included in the "worker" category of the national census. The *sangathan* members participated in drafting the petition and circulating to all the village collectives. Eight hundred women were mobilized to put their thumb impressions on the petition. And finally representatives of the *sangathan* met the officials concerned to press their demands.

Negotiating to improve their status was one thing, but the women could not live off petitions and craft centres. They realized that until alternative marketing options were created the middlemen would continue to exploit them. Thus KMVS began a dialogue with the Government Handicrafts Corporation which markets Gujarati handicrafts. They procure 25% of the handicrafts from Kutch from middlemen. The negotiations yielded results. The Corporation agreed to make direct purchases from the *sangatha*ns.

This was not all. KMVS also lobbied with the Handicrafts Board to become a partner in educating the artisans. They organized special trainings on the work spheres managed by the middlemen. These skills and information were applied by the women in interactions and negotiations in the open markets and accessing other government schemes. This process was initiated and facilitated by KMVS but they ensured that the *sangathan* women participated at every stage.

On the land issue, PACOS too, has emphasized dialogue, negotiation and collective action. For example, they organized a public dialogue with government officials. Three hundred people from 15 villages attended the meeting and discussed government plans to give forest and community land for plantations. During this interaction people learnt the value of asserting their rights. There were tangible aspects to the learning process as well. Community members learnt how to organise a dialogue with government officials without depending on the traditional leaders; use different communication strategies like posters etc; strategize and negotiate with mainstream institutions like the bureaucracy and media. The publicity elicited an immediate response from the government. The application to set up the plantation in the area was rejected and the government promised to hasten the processing of land applications in the area. With respect to the bureaucracy, the community realized that there was more to learn - on that occasion the meeting ended up being controlled by the District Officer. As a consequence, some of the women who were prepared to speak were not able to do so. They needed to further develop their leadership skills.

After an action-oriented activity, like the one described above, PACOS also organizes a reflection exercise to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the activity, and plan the next action. However, by PACOS's own admission, this tends to be forgotten. The "doing" tends to be emphasized rather than this aspect of learning. But they are equally quick to admit that unless one ensures an on-going process of reflection learning cannot be consolidated.

Yet, the issue-based workshops organized by PACOS consolidate analytic skills, while also addressing information needs. These training programmes are planned in consultation with potential participants. Apart from information, they typically include an in-depth analysis of the issue and policies. Leadership skills and gender awareness form an important component of these trainings. Through small groups discussions and interactive exercises participants analyse their experiences which is broadened to building a macro-level perspective. For instance, a workshop on land would include information on the traditional land adat and the modern land laws, the impact of such laws on indigenous communities and the communities recommendations regarding the changes they would like to see in land laws and policies. In fact PACOS has collated these views and presented them at a national conference on indigenous people's land, initiated by the National Indigenous Peoples' Network, Malaysia. Thus the workshops have fed into trying to effect change at a macro level.

Learning specific skills

After the initial period of analysis, mobilization and trust building, both groups had to initiate work on the issues identified. This involved a process of learning specific skills as well as accessing information. Gradually this meant moving into new work areas as well.

KMVS, for instance, began working on savings and credit. This activity involves the *sangathan* conducting its own banking transactions - making deposits and withdrawals, sanctioning loans, updating pass books, maintaining cash ledgers etc. Before the *sangathan* members were in a position to take independent charge of these activities, they had to be trained. Aside from learning how to handle nitty-gritty banking transactions, they were also introduced to wider issues as well- developing accounting systems to ensure transparency, evolving a vision on how the collective funds can be used effectively by the community and how rules should be formulated keeping different group members interests in mind. Similarly, in the case of natural resource management, *sangathan* members were systematically trained to plan and implement environment works (small water harvesting structures, bio-gas plants, compost pits) and were exposed to basic environmental education.

It was only after five years (during this period various literacy efforts had failed), that the *sangathan*'s leadership began making an effort to learn to read and write. Earlier, while engaged in constructing the work-space for instance, though literacy skills were necessary for account keeping, the women did not regard it a felt need. Instead, innovative "non-literacy" methods, using embroidery (where different columns of stitches signified denominations of money spent and different types of stitches were evolved for different categories of expenditure) were used to develop an account management system. KMVS, along with NIRANTAR, is presently engaged in developing an issue based curriculum that links literacy and numeracy with issues like reproductive health, ecology, banking, legal rights, and local governance. The gradually improving literacy skills, and the need for information, have motivated one of the *sangatha*ns to produce a newsletter and manage a screen-printing unit.

In Sabah too, women were trained in specific activities. Initially they shied away from getting involved in the land issue. Such contentious issues, they felt, were at odds with their traditional roles as wives and mothers. PACOS decided not to confront this gender division of roles. Instead they got women involved in activities like income-generation and education, which they perceived as non-threatening. This in the long-run would help women gain confidence and get involved in the more antagonistic issues.

The group working on income generation, were convinced, after a process of discussion, that the products they developed must conserve the environment (for example rattan and other plants used for handicrafts), as well as revive indigenous skills such as weaving. Women are trained in quality control, marketing and networking with other organisations to develop new products and markets. As a marketing strategy, PACOS organized a bazaar to sell and exchange produce and to popularize traditional handicrafts. This served as a cultural event as well. The outcome was an increase in the production of traditional handicrafts and revived an interest in popular culture. But equally important were the skills that the community had learnt in organizing the event.

The other activity that has generated enthusiasm among the women is education. They have been actively involved in setting up two pre-schools with PACOS's assistance. Through this activity not only has the community learnt to run and monitor a programme, but debates and discussions around the issue of whether teaching-learning should be in the local or national language involved a considerable amount of reflection and analysis. Various arguments were put forward by PACOS to establish the importance of the local language that is considered inferior. Parents have gradually been convinced that marginalizing their local language would amount to losing and invisiblizing their culture. Such discussions have led to including stories, folk tales etc., that are predominantly part of the oral traditions, in the school curriculum. These efforts of PACOS have aimed at reviving an interest in local knowledge systems.

In the examples cited in this section the "learning" components are clearly discernable and takes place at different levels:

* In planning and organizing the activity

* By participating in the activity-which typically involves interacting with bureaucracy and other structures of power, having access to new information and learning concrete skills.

* Reflection and analysis after the event/activity

Learning to Build People's Organisations

The examples presented demonstrate that each intervention created opportunities for specific learning strategies and involved some aspect of community participation and management. This is important, as managing an activity leads to ownership of the educational process. And ownership is critical to any process of empowerment. Integral to sustaining this process is building people's organizations and developing local leadership. This forms the core of both PACOS and KMVS's work.

PACOS has organized village based groups (the land group was set up informally, while income generation and education committees were set up more formally). The controversial nature of the land issue, meant strengthening alternative local leadership (through regular meetings, specific training and through issue-based campaigns) as well as employing other strategies to counter, but not antagonize, the traditional leadership. The community level meetings strengthened local leadership by emphasizing collective decision-making and responsibility yet it did not alienate the traditional leadership. Women were allowed greater participation through this process. Similarly, by undertaking non-controversial activities (like education and income-generation) they got the support of traditional leaders.

KMVS soon realized the need to decentralize and began setting up simple management systems at the block level. This crystallized the second tier (the village collective is the first) in the KMVS structure - the block-level *sangathan*. The block level office became a central meeting point for trainings, procuring work orders, depositing finished goods, managing other activities like savings and credit, water resource management etc. This is managed by the women members and has spawned new educational needs around the *sangathan*'s need to:

- Make development plans for their communities.
- Understand and handle money independently and generate an income for their *sangathan*.
- To run centralized service centres - such as banks, legal aid, fodder centres, etc. - for the community.
- Become the main mobilizers and educators in the area, while KMVS develops tools by which the village leaders and facilitators could"educate', "mobilize" and "train".
- To seek knowledge - not just information - and build an in-depth understanding of issues they are engaged with.

KMVS, the third tier, now supports the *sangathan* to fulfil these needs.

CONCLUSION

Poverty alleviation and adult education are considered two distinct programmes. Adult education has been marginalized as a result. Many groups dealing with people's problems have been unable to integrate education into their programmes. Conversely, adult educators have been unable to intervene and integrate educational processes within poverty alleviation programmes. The case studies, however, provide valuable lessons on how these linkages can be made. Both groups effectively converted every situation into an opportunity to create awareness. Awareness comes through analysis and reflection and reflection is the highest cognitive ability. The case studies have also shown that this intervention and integration has not been a one-time effort. It has changed and evolved and responded to the different learning needs identified by the participants and organizers. Integral to this process is the need to move away from the"project approach" and build people's organizations and mobilize the community to act.

The other lesson to be gleaned from the case studies is that, if development and education are to be empowering and transformative processes then both practical and strategic interests of women and other marginalized groups must be addressed. This means that the learning process must challenge existing inequalities in dominant development paradigms, as well as provide concrete skills and activities. For example in the case studies, improving the status of craftswomen by pressuring the government was combined with developing alternative marketing options or constructing a collective work site; protesting against the existing land policies and entry of logging companies was taken up in conjunction with initiating income generating activities.

The tangible and intangible aspects of learning have to be addressed as well. Both case studies show that building self-esteem and confidence are critical, particularly for women. Developing analytic skills and the ability to negotiate and strategize are as crucial as say, literacy or accounting skills. Such a process will however, be sustained only if the community feels they have a stake in it. And eventually this will lead to creating people's organizations and developing local leadership. However, as macro-level development planning does not consider building self-esteem, mobilization and organization to be effective tools for poverty alleviation the role of education in influencing the planning and development process is crucial.

The knowledge produced and reinforced through mainstream development practices must be challenged to ensure that the development and learning process validates indigenous forms of knowledge and women's ways of knowing. If this is the case then an attempt has to be made to minimize hierarchies between different forms of knowledge. Both case studies, establish that contrary to conventional notions of education where knowledge and information is transferred from one group of people (providers, educators etc) to the other (learners, beneficiaries, target group), if learning is to be non-hierarchical then the process must be interactive. Moreover, peoples lives cannot be compartmentalized or viewed simplistically because they are not so. Learning needs and development initiatives must respond to these complexities.

Lastly, despite, the often difficult relationship between NGOs and Government, if content is to be given to government programmes and policies, then NGOs will have to play an increasingly critical role. Social transformation and empowerment require two synergistic processes: mobilization, organization and social action at one end and transformation of government structures, institutions and policies at the other. NGOs and governments must come together to face this challenge together.

Endnotes

1. The seminar entitled "Learning to Survive" was organized by NIRANTAR, UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and German Foundation for Development (DSE) and took place at Hua Hin, Thailand from September 9 to 13, 1996.

2. See Sen, Gita and Grown, Caren. Development, Crises and Alternative Development. Earthscan, 1987.

3. Refer Kabeer, N. Reversed Realities. Kali for Women. 1994.

4. "Learning to Survive: A Case Study of Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan" was presented by Sushma Iyengar and "Impact of Development on Indigenous Women and Communities in Sabah" was presented by Jeanne Hon at Hua Hin, September, 1996.

5. KMVS has a three tier structure. A mahila mandal (Village-level women´s collective) is formed by those women who are interested in KMVS´s activities. The average size of these mahila mandals is 30 women. The mahila mandals of one block (administrative sub-unit of a district) together forms the block-level sangathan. A sangathan hjas about 20-30 mahila mandals. Five to six elected representatives of the mahila mandal plan, manage and implement different activities at the block level. All such block-level sangathans together constitute the third tier - KMVS. The governing body of KMVS has government, NGOs and block-level village representatives.

6. For example, clearing the land on the banks of rivers, at the catchment areas or fishing methods are regulated by the community during the fishing season. Similarly, forested areas from which produce and materials for household consumption are taken, are never cleared in order to maintain a permanent resource bank.

7. Refer Kabeer, op.cit. p.230.

References

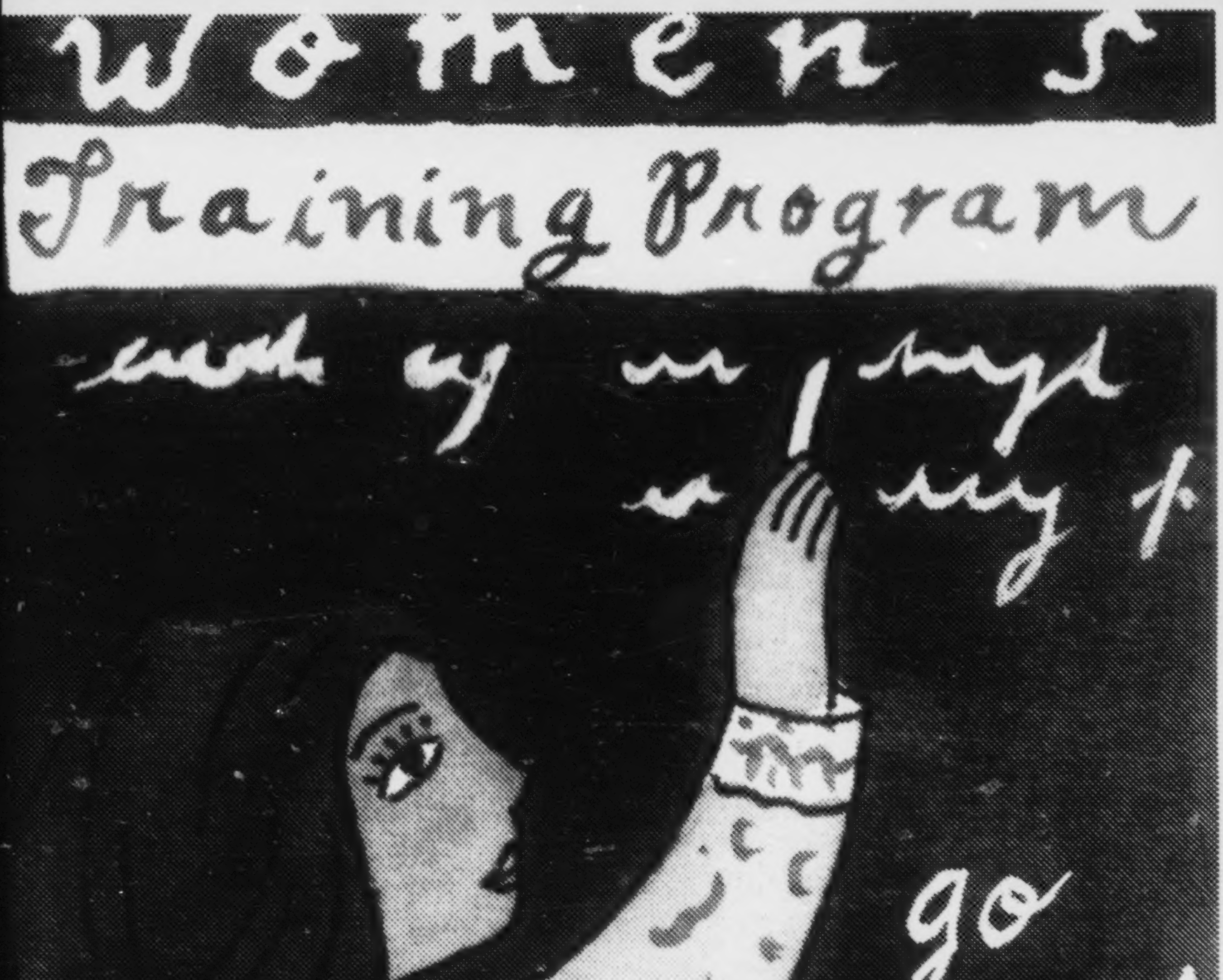
Kabeer, Naila. 1994. *Reversed Realities. Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought.* Kali for Women, New Delhi.

Sen, G. and Grown, C. 1987. *Development, Crises and Alternative Vision (DAWN).* Earthscan Publications, London.

George Susan and Sabelli, Fabrizio. 1994. *Faith and Credit. The World Bank's Secular Empire.* Penguin.

UNDP. *Human Development Report.* 1996.

Moser, Caroline. 1993. *Gender Planning and Development.* Routledge.


womens
Training Program
go
forward
5
Steps

WORKERS' EDUCATION:VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL TRAINING FOR WOMEN IN VIETNAM

Tran Thi Hoa

Situation of Female Workers in Vietnam

Vietnamese women account for 51.8% of the total population (more than 74 million people) and 52% of the labor force. Thirty two percent of households are headed by women. In the economic life of Vietnam, women play an important role with the percentage of economically active women exceeding 70, and with women particularly dominant in trading, textiles and leather manufacturing, education and health care. They represent:

- 78% in commerce
- 26% in construction
- 46% in post and telegraphy
- 70% in agriculture
- 37% in science
- 70% in education and training
- 41% in forestry
- 63.7% in health care
- 67% in light industry
- 56% in finance and credit

Since 1986, Vietnam has pursued the policy of renovation moving from centrally planned economy to the market - oriented economy under the socialist direction and State management. In spite of the important economic contributions made by women, changing economic conditions are presenting new challenges and opportunities for women. Due to low skills, many women were dismissed from work in the process of reorganization of the State-owned enterprises in early 90's. Of the 25,000 employees that were dismissed from work, women account for 57%. Nowadays, more and more women enter the informal sector (70%) while in the formal sector, women account for only 52%. It is estimated that the recruitment of workers from the formal sector will be limited, about 20% of the social labor force by the year 2000. Meanwhile among early retired workers due to health problems, women account for more than 60%.

At the moment, women workers face the following problems:

- Low education and skills (leading to lower competition by women than men in the labor market).
- Acceptance of simple and low-paid jobs.
- High responsibilities for reproduction role
- Limited public services
- Lower mobility than men
- Low productivity and low incomes
- Underemployment faced by women in rural areas, one third of their working time is not used productively which leads to urban migration to seek jobs for better incomes.
- Unemployment of about 5.54% suffered by women in urban areas, in which 51.31% of them are at 15 - 24 years old.
- High risk of loss of job.

Consequently, unemployment, underemployment and low incomes have driven some women to illegal actions (e.g. smuggling, drug abuse and prostitution).

Yet we realize that the development of human resources plays a very important role in the development of the country. Now, people-centered development approach is accepted by many societies. In 1994, the first Labor Code of Vietnam was promulgated in which a special Chapter is allocated for female workers (Chapter X from Articles 109 - 118). It emphasizes that "the State will have policies and methods to expand the employment opportunities, improve the working conditions, upgrade professional skills, improve health care, physical and mental welfare for female workers to enable them to develop their capacities and harmonize their working and family life..."

Educational Attainment in Vietnam

We understand that literacy has been identified as the number one problem for development and the advancement of women: "the illiterate person can neither achieve the full development of his human personality nor take a real part in the progress of society ...". Widespread literacy has been positively correlated with societies achieving industrialization, significant agricultural development, general economic growth and structural change.

It appears that the objectives and fulfillment of universal literacy, primary and secondary education are keys to both development and to women's effective participation in society and economy. By promoting opportunities for both girls and boys to attend school and to finish primary and secondary education they are encouraged to take advantage of opportunities at later stages of life.

Therefore, Vietnam Government has spared all efforts to achieve universal education for all. Female literacy rate in Vietnam is around 85%. Although these figures compare quite favorable with other developing countries, it should be noted that they are still lower than the educational attainment of men especially at the higher levels.

In the elementary and secondary levels, girl enrollment increases but it is less than boys. In higher education, the number of female students decreases over time.

Except for pedagogy, the proportion of female students is lower than male counterparts in all subjects. Female enrollment increases in basic sciences, economics and laws, but it decreases in other subjects.

How Vietnam Deals with Education for its Workers

It is obvious that secondary education after universal primary education was achieved, has enabled its labor force to assimilate technical change. This education, combined with on - job training has been identified as a significant factor in achieving higher productivity, faster economic growth and change. Hence, economic growth and educational advancement have been tightly linked. Productivity growth will be largely determined by the knowledge and skills of workers who employ technology directly or indirectly in the production process. The recognition that education and training are essential inputs for economy development has become accepted wisdom.

In Vietnam, only 9% of the female workers received skills training. Recognizing the problem of education and low skills faced by female workers, the Labor and Education Ministries have set up 88 skills training centers (32 provincial and 56 district centers) and more than 800 establishments for vocational training and Consultation which provide 11,944 courses for 318.787 persons, of which women account for 45 - 62% of the total trainees. In addition, mass and other social organizations also set up their hundreds of skills training centers at city, provincial and district levels to provide skills training to their target audiences respectively.

The need is not only to make widespread vocational training, but to raise the skills level of workers. It is necessary also to help a number of workers to change their jobs to meet the needs of industrialization and modernization of the country, to transfer from simple manual works to jobs done with modern productions means and new technologies.

The forecast for development tendency of employment and training in Vietnam from now to the year 2000 is as follows:

Human power

Year	1995	2000
Population (million people)	74	82
Workers (million people)	40	45
Agricultural workers:		
- Percentage among the total number of workers	72	45
- Million people	28.8	20.3
- Percentage of worker who need training	12	20
- Average number of workers who need training every year (thousand people)	700	810
Industrial workers		
- Percentage among the total number of workers	16	20
- Million people	6.44	8
- Percentage of workers who need training	12	25
- Number of workers who need training every year (thousands of people)	154	400
Service workers		
- Percentage among the total number of workers	22	35
- Million people	8.8	15.8
- Percentage of workers who need training	12	25
- Number of workers who need training every year (thousand people)	320	790
Total number of workers who need training every year (thousand people)	1.174	2000
Total number of people who need regular training every year (thousand people)	391 (315)	666 (496)

Source from State Planning Committee

Through the above table, we can see a great change in the structure of worker from 1995 to the year 2000 where the percentage of agricultural workers among the total number of workers from 72% in 1995, will decrease to 45% in the year 2000 and where workers in industry increase to 20% from 16%.Meanwhile service workers from 22% in 1995, will increase to 35% by the year 2000. This percentage may increase to 60% in 2020.

Due to the above need of human power, the requirements of human power training are very high. However considering the conditions to carry out training activities, we should recognize that despite many efforts of the State, we still have many difficulties, especially financial difficulties.

Responsive to this tendency, at the VIIth Vietnamese Women's National Congress in 1992, the "upgrading women's knowledge on all aspects" and "support to activities for employment creation and increased incomes for women" have been identified as the first and second priority programmes of the Vietnam Women's Union during 1992 - 1997. Thirty-eight provincial and 93 district skills training centers have been established by Vietnam Women's Union. About 15 traditional and non-traditional skills have been provided to women by these centers such as industrial and manual sewing, embroidery, weaving, knitting, catering, informatics, hotel and restaurant services, photography, computer operation, foreign languages, office administration. Presently 57,692 women have received such skills training, of which 25,329 women are able to get jobs (about 43.91%) and other 18,071 women are able to run self-employment and 649 women have become micro-entrepreneurs after training.

Our Women's Union runs a programme to promote micro and medium female entrepreneurs by providing them advanced training on management, planning, marketing, accounting etc. and give them credit for development of their business.

In rural areas, we run a number of training on VAC ecological system development, agriculture extension such as high quality fruit growing, clean vegetable growing, profitable plants and animal breeding, and appropriate use of pesticides and fertilizers.

Furthermore in highland areas, we conduct functional literacy and post literacy training for women.

To run these skills training courses effectively, our Union has cooperated with the local and external specialists who are economists, agronomists, teachers, technicians, artisans etc. from Ministry of Labor, Education and various Institutions and organizations inside and outside Vietnam. We also receive valuable support and assistance from our Government and international organizations to strengthen our activities in this area in the hope that with the educational attainment and skills acquired, more and more women have access to employment opportunities and better incomes.

CONCLUSION

Skills training programmes for women still focus on many traditional professions. It is important to shift it to non-traditional occupations with the hope that women can enjoy equal footing with men in terms of employment. Selection of skills for training and training methodologies should be designed in responsive to the demand of the labor markets locally and internationally.

It is good if skills training centers could plan to provide skills training in accordance with the employers' orders.

Skills acquired and job opportunities must be linked. Skills training is a "trial and error" process through which theory must be matched with practice, something which requires not only information but also time, patience and great efforts. Decision makers should consider their own transitional strategies, policies and institutions to tailor appropriate training and educational system to mainstream women in development.

SINGAPORE NATIONAL TRADES UNION CONGRESS

Christine Yeh

INTRODUCTION

Singapore is a nation state located 137 kilometres north of the equator with an area of 641.4 square kilometres. It has no natural resources except a fine harbor. It has a population of 2.98 million people. Singapore became independent on August 9, 1965.

Women make 49.7% (Jun. 1995) of the resident population in Singapore or a ration of 98.7 to 100 men. This ratio is slightly better than the ratio of 95 women to 100 men for the Asia and Pacific region as a whole (United Nations 1991).

In 1990, 88% of the resident households owned the dwellings they lived in compared with 59% in 198O. Public health measures, a high standard of medical services and a rising standard of living have produced a healthier generation. Life expectancy at birth is 74.2 years for males and 78.7 years for females in 1995. Women have equal access to nutrition, education and health programmes in Singapore.

EDUCATION

The literacy rate of Singapore women aged 15 years and over has increased from 78% in 1985 to 86.7% in 1995. The equal opportunity policy for both sexes has ensured virtually equal opportunity of both sexes in school and has led to an increase in the number of girls enrolling in tertiary institutions. A conscious effort is made in all subjects of the school curriculum not to gender-type roles in the instructional materials produced. All schools will be equipped with adequate physical facilities to offer Home Economics and Technical Studies to all lower secondary pupils, both males and females.

By 1995, 84% of Singaporeans have completed at least secondary education compared with 79% in 1986. Today, 20% of each cohort could go to the Universities and 40% to the Polytechnics.

The number of girls enrolling in tertiary institutions has increased over the years. Females now account for half of the enrolment up to pre-university. A higher proportion of females make it to tertiary institutions. In 1994, there were 76 females to 100 males in the tertiary institutions. The enrolment ratio for females in polytechnics had increased significantly from 0.1% in 1965 to 4.8% in 1985 and to 19% in 1995. The ratio for females in universities also rose steadily from 1.7% in 1965 to 6.5% in 1985 to 16% in 1994.

CHANGES IN THE ROLE OF WOMEN

The role of women in Singapore and the world at large has changed over the years. The traditional view of women in society was confined to a home-maker, that is to stay at home, clean, raise children. With more women involved in educational, cultural, sports, economic, political and social activities in our society, their roles have also changed.

In 1996, about 41.5% of the workforce in Singapore are women with a female participation rate of 51.5%. In 1965, women only made up of 27.6% of the total workforce and in 1985, 36.4%. The percentage of women in the workforce with at least a post-secondary education has increased from 16.5% in 1985 to 27% in 1994. More women are also assuming supervisory and leadership positions in the society. In 1995, 11.5% of the working women are holding the post of legislators in society, senior officials, managers and professionals compared with 1985, only 6.9%. There are also more women in technical and associate professional jobs, an increase of 5.4% from 1985 to 1995, 10.2% to 15.6%.

SINGAPORE LABOR LEGISLATION

The Singapore Government is committed to the advancement and development of all Singaporeans. It advocates an equal opportunity policy for both sexes in all sectors on the principle of meritocracy. This policy is incorporated in the planning and implementation of policies and programmes of the various government ministries.

The Women´s Charter which came into force in 1961 represented a milestone in the development of women. It protected women´s rights in marriage and property and was the foundation for other developments such as maternity benefits and non-discriminatory hiring policies of employers.

The labor laws of Singapore such as Employment Act, Industrial Relations Act and the Trade Union Act give equal rights to men and women in employment. There are provisions in the Employment Act for maternity leave and the prohibition of the dismissal of women on grounds of pregnancy.

SINGAPORE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT

The Singapore National Trades Union Congress (NTUC) is a federation of trade unions set up in 1961. As of September 1996, there were 74 trade unions and 3 associations affiliated to NTUC, with a total membership of 250,688-- workers in both the private and public sectors. Women´s membership in trade unions has also increased since 1980. Women now make up 44% of the National Trade Unions Congress total membership strength. At present, female leadership at the branch and executive council levels stand at 24 per cent and 17 per cent respectively.

NTUC´s main objectives are:

1. To improve the working conditions of workers and enhance their economic and social status;
2. To promote good labor-management relations and industrial harmony so as to ensure the well-being of workers, and to achieve economic growth for companies and the nation;
3. To secure opportunities for workers to upgrade their skills and productivity for their personal benefit as well as the benefit of their employers;
4. To take part in the national decision-making process through tripartite bodies like the National Wages Council, representation on statutory boards, and the work of labor Members of Parliament;
5. To organize educational, cultural, recreational and other activities for the benefit of active and retired members and their families, as well as charitable activities to help the less privileged in society;
6. To work with fraternal trade unions around the world in opposing various forms of social injustice and discrimination.

While our trade unions serve as guardians of workers´ rights, NTUC cooperatives provide much-needed economic backup. In addition, the Singapore

Labor Foundation and NTUC Clubs play important roles in meeting workers´ and their families´ social needs.

Members in the trade unions through collective bargaining have secured better fringe benefits for both male and female workers. Female union members are given the following benefits: paid maternity leave, child care leave, child care sick leave, paternity leave, company crèches, etc. Union members also enjoy welfare benefits offered by the unions such as grants and subsidies for educational purposes and training courses and discounted rates for overseas tours, etc.

NTUC WOMEN´S COMMITTEE & WOMEN´S PROGRAMME DEPARTMENT

In the late 1970s, the NTUC Women´s Committee began to encourage members to set up women´s committees within their own unions. At present, 34 women committees have been set up at the trade union level at various affiliated unions to act as links between the NTUC and their unions. Besides strengthening the network of communication with the general women membership, the department also hope to widen the pool of women leaders so that more talents can be scouted for leadership development.

The NTUC Women´s Programme Department was set up in 1976 to better coordinate activities for women union members. The main objectives of the NTUC Women´s Programme Department are to expedite the integration of women into trade union movement; to promote the socio-economic status of women in the workforce; and to enhance the political, economic and social awareness of women so that they can contribute towards national development.

WORKERS´ EDUCATION

In Singapore, there is no sex discrimination in the areas of education. Both males and females are given equal opportunity to upgrade themselves in all areas.

Realizing that the workers need to be trained and retrained with the relevant skills in order to keep pace with the increasingly complex technologies associated with the capital-intensive industries, NTUC has set up a Skills Development Department. The objective of this department is to promote education and skills training among workers so as to increase their productivity, job security and to enable them to cope with the changing needs of the economy.

NTUC Skills Development Department works closely with various government bodies, training institutions, unions and employers. It is represented in national organizations concerned with training like Institute of Technical Education, Singapore Productivity and Standards Board, Singapore Development Fund and Singapore Manufacturers Association.

The department conducts basic literacy and numeracy programmes, computer programmes and any other national training programmes to enable workers to undertake skills training courses and to improve their productivity at work. The department informs workers of the educational and skills training programmes available and tries to motivate them to learn new skills or to upgrade their skills.

Courses provided by NTUC Skills Development Department

A. Basic Education

There are two programmes under this category:

(1) Basic Education for Skills Training (BEST) programme

(2) Worker Improvement through Secondary Education (WISE) programme

These two programmes offer courses in English language and Mathematics to help adults attain the level of literacy and numeracy competency required for them to upgrade their technical skills and knowledge. BEST is for the primary level and offers English and Mathematics of primary 3 to 6 standard while WISE offers that of secondary 1 to 4 standard.

B. Generic Skills

Programmes classified under this category includes:

1. *FAST FORWARD* courses

FAST FORWARD is the national televideo training programme managed by the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board. It is for workers who have very little time for training. FAST FORWARD can help workers learn very quickly all the important skills they need for their work. Courses are conducted via flexible learning using videos and easy-to-read course books. Courses available under this programme are *Easy English* (oral communication), *Working English* (written communication), *Easy Maths* (basic measurement techniques), *Express Maths* (basic quantitative techniques), *Successful Supervision* (basic supervision), WORKperfect (basic quality management) and *In Healthy Company* (personal health management).

2. *Core Skills for Effective and Change (COSEC)*

COSEC is a generic skills programme which enables workers to adapt better to their changing work environment. It covers topics like communication, personal effectiveness, quality, problem solving and work economics.

3. *PRIME*

PRIME, like COSEC, also focuses on generic skills such as communication. However, PRIME is concerned with the needs of older workers for improving their productivity, for example, through better working relationships with younger workers.

4. *Certificate in Office Skills (COS)*

COS provides fundamental office skills so that trainees can communicate and use English efficiently at work, handle administrative /clerical procedures and computer software and upgrade themselves from WISE/Secondary level to take on administrative or clerical work.

C. Computer Courses

The department has been organizing various computer courses so as to keep up with the ever changing technology. Some of the courses offered are *Computer Introductory Course For Beginners, Microsoft Windows, MS Word for Windows*, Graphics & Desktop Publishing Courses like *MS Powerpoint, Pagemaker*, etc.

As we are approaching the 21st century and to catch up with the development of Information Technology (IT) in Singapore, the department has come up with *POWER 21 programme*. This programme helps workers to become more productive and participate in obtaining and sharing information globally through the Internet. It is designed to educate the workforce on the impact of IT in the office and at home, equip the workforce with the basic knowledge of work group computing, Internet and multimedia technology, empower the knowledge workers with the ability to use IT effectively and enhance work flow and improve communication within and beyond organization boundaries.

In addition, computer courses in Chinese language are also conducted like *Computer Introductory Course For Beginners*, *AutoCad* (Technical Drawing software), *IT POWER 21*, *WINDOWS 95*, *Chinese STAR*, *Chinese Wordprocessing-Hansvision*, *Using Internet*, etc.

D. On-the-Job Training (OJT) Programmes

NTUC encourages employers to pay attention to the training needs of mature workers, and those who work shifts. As many of these workers find it difficult to forgo overtime work to attend training, on-the-job training is one of the solutions. As such, NTUC Skills Development Department, together with Government, Employers and Affiliated Unions, identify the skills training needs of the company and promote a structures On-the-Job Training programmes accordingly at the workplace.

Skills Redevelopment Programme

As we are marching towards the 21st century, NTUC has identified skills upgrading to remain employable as one of the key projects. And having noticed that many workers still do not have the required skills and capabilities to handle high value-added jobs available at present and in the future, the NTUC has taken the lead in the Skills Redevelopment Programme to help workers improve their employability and continue to secure jobs. The motto being: "New skills today, better employability tomorrow."

This programme is supported by the Economic Development Board (EDB), Singapore Productivity and Standards Board (PSB), and the Institute of Technical Education (ITE). This NTUC-EDB-PSB-ITE Skills Redevelopment Programme was officially launched in December 1996. It is hoped to develop a training culture in Singapore. That is, an environment in which companies make it a point to constantly enhance their workers´ skills, the Government and training institutions play their part in developing relevant skills of workers, unions mobilize workers to take training and retraining seriously and the workers themselves are receptive to skills upgrading so to improve their value in the job market. This is hoped to improve the future prospects of workers.

The aims of the Skills Redevelopment Programme are:

1. To retrain workers who have been or are going to be retrenched for employment in new or growing sectors of the economy;

2. To help older and low-educated workers who are in their 40s and above fit into new jobs with their current employer or in other sectors; and

3. To upgrade the skills of workers who are in their 30s now so that their employability in the future will be ensured.

At present, 10 companies have given their support to the programme. They are expected to train up to 1500 workers, most of whom have less than `O´ level or secondary education and 50% with primary or little formal education. With training, more then two-thirds are expected to obtain at least NTC3 certification.

In the future, NTUC will also continue to work with Government, Employers and Affiliated Unions to identify skills training needs, promote structures and On-The-Job Training programmes at the workplace. The use of information technology for every worker will be promoted and encouraged through various IT-related training courses conducted by the NTUC Skills Development Department.

BACK TO WORK PROGRAMME

A national Conference on the theme *"Back To Work - Are You Ready?"* was organized by the NTUC Women´s Programme Department, together with the National Productivity Board (NPB) which is now known as Singapore Productivity and Standards Board (PSB), and co-sponsored by the Singapore National Employers´ Federation (SNEF), People´s Association (PA) and Singapore Council of Women´s Organization (SCWO). The aim was to promote awareness and provide information and assistance in terms of training to help non-working women re-enter the workforce, especially in part-time and flexi-time work. After the National Conference, the department, together with the People´s Association, has organized several workshops at community centers to reach out to more housewives who wish to return to work. A START (confidence building) Programme was organized at NPB to help them develop confidence and adjust to working life as quickly as possible. The progress and development was monitored by a tripartite coordinating committee comprising representatives from SNEF, NPB, Ministry of Labor (MOL) and NTUC. The department is pleased that this project has been officially endorsed by the government September 1996 with the theme *"Back To Work"* programme. This MOL-PSB-NTUC-SNEF tripartite programme has expanded the scope to include older persons as well as retrenched workers. The aim is to help these potential employees to find gainful employment.

It is hoped that the tripartite project will help to create greater awareness on the benefits of part-time and flexible work arrangements and pave the way for more of such forms of employment to be introduced in Singapore so as to achieve a higher labor force participation rate and better utilization of our indigenous manpower resources.

Once an applicant is successfully placed, the candidate will undergo core skills training provided by the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board (PSB). The course helps build up candidate´s confidence, communication skills, personal effectiveness and provides the candidate with basic skills required by the job like computer literacy. In addition, job skills training are also provided to equip the candidate with the necessary job-related skills, depending on the nature of the job.

Besides the applicants, PSB also conducts training sessions for managers of participating companies on how to motivate and better manage housewives and older persons seeking employment. The course will enable managerial staff responsible for recruiting and supervising employees to identify employees´ needs and to devise and implement flexible work arrangements to suit their needs. PSB, together with SNEF, also conducts programmes to train managers on how to redesign jobs for more flexible work.

Being a workers´ organization, the NTUC repeatedly called on the Government to implement measures to attract more women to work, such as part-time and flexible time work, paid time off for urgent family matters, etc. The NTUC has also tried to improve the working conditions of women.

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

In 1992, the NTUC established a tripartite Steering Committee and a Working Committee to look into ways to encourage working women to remain in or re-enter the workforce through the promotion of flexible work arrangements. The NTUC Women's Programme Department then launched a Study of Flexible Work Arrangements in Singapore to examine ways to retain female employees in the labor market by helping them balance their roles at work and in the family, and to determine whether economically inactive women would enter the labor market if they are provided with suitable arrangements. The conclusion of this study is that flexible work arrangements are effective in helping working women balance their dual roles. As such, the Committee recommended that employers, unions and the government should work together to promote flexible work arrangements as a means to help working women cope with their roles at work and in the family.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSES

- ***Singapore Institute of Labor Studies***

The Singapore Institute of Labor Studies (SILS) is an institute set up by the NTUC in 1990 for labor education. It conducts courses on trade unionism, leadership and other subjects. Its primary objective is to equip union leaders with the knowledge and skills to manage their organizations, represent workers' interests, and help to establish good labor-management relations at the company and industry level.

SILS runs Diploma and Certificate courses on Industrial Relations. Graduates of Diploma courses at SILS will be eligible for admission to degree courses at the Open University. In conjunction with academics, SILS conducts research on issues relevant to the labor movement.

- ***NTUC Women's Programme***

The NTUC Women's Programme Department plays a catalyst role to cultivate and groom more women members to serve the labor movement and also to upgrade the quality of existing leaders in the union movement at all levels. Therefore leadership training courses, seminars and forums are organized for women leaders.

This year, the NTUC Women's Programme Department, jointly with the Singapore Institute of Labor Studies, has designed a structured and progressive training programme to develop effective women leaders. This programme incorporates the core topics of the Basic Certificate in Industrial Relations (BCIR) Programme. Having obtained this certificate, participants are then eligible to continue with the Intermediate and Advanced Certificates of Industrial Relations Programmes as part of a structured approach to Trade Union Leadership Development.

This course is targeted at the women unionists who want to build up self-confidence and enhance leadership effectiveness to better serve the union in particular and the labor movement in general. The course provides participants an opportunity to develop confidence and exchange ideas and experiences with fellow women unionists, to better understand their rights, roles and responsibilities as women unionists and provided for by legislation; and to glean insights into personal effectiveness, leadership styles, team-building, problem-solving and decision-making.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR WORKERS´ EDUCATION

A. *SLF/NTUC Training Fund*

The Singapore Labor Foundation (SLF) was established by an Act of Parliament to further the development of the trade union movement. It is funded by the contributions from unions, cooperatives and individuals. SLF, in turn, provides various financial support to unions for various activities. These include grants and subsidies for educational purposes and for training courses and overseas tours for model workers and dedicated unionists.

The SLF/NTUC Training Fund was set up on 1 April 1995. The objectives are: to provide subsidy for unions to send their leaders and officials for leadership training courses conducted by SILS or jointly by unions with SILS, and to sponsor seminars, courses, conferences, educational and training programmes that may be conducted by the NTUC in furtherance of its objectives. The fund was revised effective January 1, 1997 to incorporate the grant for skills training and retraining for union members, starting with retrenched members and include the ACIR course in the subsidy.

The level of subsidy has also been increased for the Basic and Intermediate Certificate in Industrial Relations (BCIR and ICIR) courses run by the Singapore Institute of Labor Studies. The skills training and retraining courses undertaken by retrenched union members is subject to certain conditions like minimum length of union membership and the courses must be certified by the Institute of Technical Education (ITE).

B. *Skills Development Fund*

Managed by the Singapore Productivity and Standards Board (PSB), the Skills Development Fund (SDF) provides incentives and grants for training of persons in the workforce, persons preparing to join the workforce, and persons re-entering the workforce. The grants are financed by collections from the skills development levy imposed on employers with workers earning S$ 1,000 or less per month. At present, the levy rate is 1%. Grants are awarded on the basis of a cost-sharing principle and the training must be relevant to the economic development of Singapore.

The focus of the SDF is on training of employees who earn S$ 1,000 and below and/or have "A" level qualifications and below.

OTHER COURSES & ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY NTUC WOMEN´S PROGRAMME DEPARTMENT

Besides organizing training courses on leadership, the department also organizes talks to equip women leaders with the updated information and tools to face the problems and challenges ahead so that they in turn will be able to help their fellow women members. Current issues talks and seminars are conducted when the need arises. Healthy lifestyle talks and personal grooming courses are also conducted to increase awareness and raise the self esteem of women in this modern society.

The NTUC Women´s Programme also organizes various activities for women workers as well as their families, such as Family Life Education Talks, Talk on Women and Health, Radio Talk Show and Family Activities.

To educate and inform women from all walks of life of their statutory rights and entitlement as well as the existence of support and assistance for those who need more direction or guidance to keep pace with the social and economic progression talking place in Singapore, a handbook titled *´Legal Rights & Support Services for Women Workers´* was jointly produced by the department and NTUC Legal department. Other publications produced by the NTUC Women´s Programme are *A Guide For Happy Families* which provides practical tips on how to handle the demands of raising a family and upholding family values; and *Survey on Family Life* which is a study conducted on the family life and living arrangements of unionized female employees with the objective of promoting the extended living arrangement.

CONCLUSION

Today, as females are joining the workforce, they have to play multiple roles - as mothers, daughters, employees/employers, subordinates/supervisors. To be able to balance between work and family is very important. Problems at home will affect one at work. To be able to co-ordinate and work with the man, at home and at work, will help the woman better cope with her multiple responsibility.

As we approach the 21st century, The NTUC Women´s Programme Department will continue to play a pro-active role in identifying new issues affecting female workers at work and their families, help women to raise their self-esteem and promote a wholesome family lifestyle

WOMEN WORKERS' EDUCATION IN MALAYSIA: A Critical Review

Chan Lean Heng

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, women workers education focuses on the objective-material situation, namely employment conditions and rights as workers. Hence, consciousness-raising on exploitation and the importance of workers unity are the usual agendas. However, women's subjectivities, their individual personally lived experiences are rarely taken on board. Even in situations where gender agendas are covered, their unspoken thoughts, repressed feelings and pains, especially the personally felt emotional subordination tend to be overlooked.

Male-dominated organizational practices and pedagogical methodologies tend to deny women workers the space and authority to talk about their experiences. The women are often silenced or made to feel more inadequate, with both internalised stereotypes and the experience of subjugation reinforced. Although educational programmes emphasize the importance of participation, they ignore the practical obstacles and internalized intimations of inferiority that make participation difficult, if not impossible. Current educational practices rarely address women workers' subjectivities, their physical or emotional well-being, and in particular, the disabling effects of being continuously subordinated.

This paper provides a historical overview and critical review of women workers education in Malaysia. It highlights the various foci of the different periods and groups, and the existing gaps in current practice. The first section describes experiences of Malaysian women factory workers. In particular, it tells of their lived experiences of emotional subordination. Next, an overview and review of educational work by the various providers identify the neglected dimensions in women workers' education in Malaysia. The final part argues for the necessity of addressing gendered experiences, especially emotional sufferings and reconstituting subjectivities in and as educational work with women workers.

MALAYSIAN FACTORY WOMEN WORKERS

Malaysia is regarded as one of the most rapid and successful Asian NIC (newly industrialising countries) - the exemplary model of export-oriented industrialization. Like many of its Asian counterparts, this economic transition was brought about by a shift in its economic development to export-oriented industrialisation from the 1970s. A corollary to this development is the integration of young women into world market factories as first generation industrial workers. It is well-known that the growth of these economies is based on the exploitation of cheap and docile female labour. Currently, not less than 80% of the Malaysian female labour force are global assembly line operators in foreign-owned transnational factories.

These Malaysian women workers, like other global assembly line operators, work in tedious, repetitive, menial tasks as non-unionised, unskilled shift-workers. They are subjected daily to rigid discipline, pressure, verbal abuse and intimidation from supervisors and even male co-workers. Their work environments are both hazardous and stressful. In fact, gender relations at work are a common source of subordination and work-related stress for the women. Corporate welfare activities, apart from obstructing and negating the development of gender and labour consciousness, manipulate and reinforce feminine stereotypes and prejudices. Indeed the TNCs (transnational corporations) exploitation of women's oriental feminine characteristics by capitalising on Asian cultural dictates on women has been well documented (Grossman 1979).

In the local communities, women workers are subjected to ridicule, abuse and sexual harassment. Belittling labels such as "Minah Karan" (meaning "hot stuff"), constantly being looked down upon as "jual murah" (cheap sale) have been used to poke fun on and implicate that factory women are "loose", immoral and easily "available" sexually. They are made to feel that they are promiscuous, hence, responsible for and shamed by the harassment inflicted on them. Such incidents are endured in silence and accompanied by feelings of inferiority because of the shame and blame they bring. For many, the endurance of this humiliation is one of the most degrading experiences of factory life. Attempts to disregard and repress such derogation often deepen their feelings of shame and inferiority.

Factory women workers in Malaysia are also at the bottom of the social hierarchy. In general, it is understood that factory girls are the ones who obtained poor grades in their public examinations, often stigmatised as "stupid girls who failed the exams" (Ackerman 1986). Hence the stereotype of academic failure is associated with factory work. Up to today, many factory women are still ashamed to openly acknowledge that they are production operators. Most are ashamed of their factory jobs and aspire to move to office work.

Like other Asian women, they are socialised into accepting patriarchal values and practices. They are expected to be respectful and obedient to male authority and domination. Cultural and religious norms demand their unquestioned subservience.

After well over 25 years of industrial development, numerous changes have taken place, even improvement of material conditions and economic standing of the women. However, certain subjective experiences remain much the same, in particular, prevailing experiences of subordination and its consequent emotional sufferings.

In my interactions with the women I have found in them an underlying pervasiveness of emotional derangement, inferiority and acquiescence. Most of them are withdrawn and submissive. They are made to feel inferior, ashamed, apologetic and guilty of the subsequent prejudices, stereotypes and abuses inflicted on them. Their stories tell of social stigmatisation, oppressive relationships, discrimination in the family, hardships, husbands (mal)treatment and infidelity, sexual abuse and supervisors' as well as male-peers' derogation. They speak of belittlement from intimates and strangers alike (see Chan 1996 for a more detailed elaboration). Underlying many of these accounts belie their subordination as women: as daughters, wives, sisters, sisters-in-law and as women workers. Emotional subordination is therefore a recurring theme in their lives..

The following quotes are expressed in some of the educational workshops which I have held with the women:

"*When I first worked here I was very appreciative of my landlord, whom we fondly call `pakcik' (uncle). I was naive not to have any suspicions when he started coming to my room for chats .. One night when his wife was not around and other girls were on night shift he came in as usual to chat but this time he sat very close. As I was cautioning myself I felt his hand on my breast .. I shouted and ran out the back-door*

.. I was too shaken .. too `malu' (ashamed) to tell anyone".

"People look down on us. They see us with only one eye. Society looks disparagingly at us. They say factory girls are cheap. They fall for any man in the street .. All this talk makes us feel inferior. Even when they are not saying I can feel their belittlement from the way they gawk at us".

"My supervisor likes to shout at me, `bodoh, bapa, mak tak ajar? Kau keturunan bodoh-kah?.' (stupid, why your parents never taught you? Are you descendant of the stupid?) If you think you cannot cope, the gate is wide open for you. I get scolded all the time, scold until I do not know how to think. I dare not and do not answer - i make don't know".

"Even the foremen takes their frustration on us. When the machine break down they shout at us "bodoh" (stupid). They blame us for mishandling the machine. I am very nervous whenever there is a breakdown".

"My husband is always complaining that I am a lousy wife. For no reason he shouts at me. His shouting makes me very nervous and confused. No matter what I do, how hard I please him, it is never good enough. I feel so inadequate".

"Even my own family feel embarrassed with my factory job. I avoid my neighbour so as not to be asked insinuating questions. One day she asked:`You come back almost midnight yesterday and left again early this morning. What do you actually do?' All I could say was work .. I felt ashamed, defensive, actually disgusted .. I am not what she may be thinking"?

"I feel very frustrated and hate myself for being so useless. Never seem to be doing anything right. I am told all the time that I am good-for-nothing".

"I feel stupid and do not know how to think anymore by all the scolding".

"I have learnt not to speak, not to feel, to disregard and appear oblivious - I just "make don't know".

Given their all-pervading experience of exploitation and abuse, it is not surprising that the women describe themselves as feeling scared, insulted, reluctant, humiliated, looked down upon and ashamed. Under their "no mood" perception of themselves as worthless, inferior or emotionally deranged, lie truly unspeakable hurts, worries, fears and insecurities. A perpetual state of unspoken troubled heart, troubled mind.[1] Their minds are clouded over with blankness and numbness. `I feel stupid and do not know how to think any more from all the scolding,' as one put it. Without words or tears, they often cry in their hearts. "The sorrow suffocates me, making me feel so numb and incapable".

Daily experiences of emotional subordination generate feelings of shame, guilt, inadequacy, self-doubt and inferiority. Cumulative effects of these experiences ingrain/ossify a deep veneer of helplessness, of fear, inertness and incapacitation. Minds become blank and dulled over time, as the women I work with often narrate. Their emotions and reactions numbed, inhibiting the potential of personal development. Devaluations are not only dehumanising and demeaning. They disable and maim confidence and self-esteem. They affect not only how the women feel about themselves but also shape their self-image and sense of their capacities - their subjectivities[2] and agency.

WOMEN WORKERS EDUCATION

A Historical Overview

Over the past three decades, different groups have emerged with different concerns in the education and welfare of women workers. These providers are varied and range from trade unions, non-union worker-oriented, social service to women-centred groups. The phenomenal entry of women into world market factories in the seventies initiated an unprecedented entry of non-union groups into the labour scene. Prior to this period, all matters pertaining to workers, men or women, were almost exclusively the domain of trade unions and unionists.

Focused attention on education for women workers only commenced in the seventies. There were basically two parallel development in this decade. One was trade union education for female union members, particularly in the tertiary sectors. The other was community education by social service groups for a newly emergent category of female production operators employed in world-market factories.

Educational provision by trade unions is undertaken at various levels, largely through its national centre - the Malaysian Trade Union Congress (MTUC). MTUC established its Women's Committee in 1968. However it was not until the late 70s that it started its education seminars to promote women's participation in trade unions and to create awareness about rights, roles and responsibilities as union members. Much of its educational thrust and focus remain unchanged till today. As the majority of factory women are not unionised and outreach by trade unions to them have been ineffective, factory women workers access to education by trade unions was minimal. Later when MTUC launched its "organising the unorganised" project in 1978, factory women became their target. The primary focus was union formation and education was akin to informing workers on their rights as workers and the benefits of unionisation. This emphasis in trade union education continued into the eighties and nineties by an international and national lobby for the unionisation of the electronics industry.

There were other worker-oriented groups and church based efforts like the Young Christian Workers (YCW) which reached out to workers in their communities and initiated community-based education in credit union, bulk-buying and cultural activities. However there was no separate or similar attention directed at women. In fact, YCW lost its focus on women at a time when the female industrial workforce was soaring. Due to internal reorganisation and reassertion that "unity is strength" its Girls' Section was merged in 1973. This merging "killed women's participation and dissipated the woman focus in its programs" (interview with a veteran YCW female activist, 1991).

The media outcry of the surging social problems of factory women as vulnerable, ignorant rural-urban migrants, in particular, sensationalised reports of unmarried pregnancies and newly-born dumped in public toilets, attracted the concern of those who were not conventionally part of the labour movement - religious bodies, welfare agencies, social service groups, government and academic institutions.

The first organisation to undertake educational work specifically for this new group of workers was the Federation of Family Planning Associations (FFPA,M). The underlying interest of FFPA,M was to provide family life education to the young women, who were targeted as potential mothers. A multi-purpose community education project and counselling service was undertaken under the name of Young Workers Community Education Project (YWCEP). Broad areas of non-formal education were aimed at the "development of young people towards responsible adulthood, for responsible adults make responsible parents" (Myrna 1977:2), with emphasis in the development of skills in planning, decision-making and handling conflict so as to "manage effectively and responsibly aspects of their lives as individuals, as parents-to-be and as members of a community" (YWCEP 1978). A hodge-podge of educational and recreational activities were provided without any systematic follow-up.

Later, the educational approach was integrated with activities like recreation and community action, stressing on the young workers' direct participation. They were directly involved through a continuous process of exposure, action and reflection to take stock of their problems, develop their own programs and take appropriate action on issues which affected them. Educational programs were related to their life situations and practical needs. Some of these programs took the form of regular working groups pertaining to consumer education, employment issues, work and living conditions, or as single events like forums, workshops, and exhibitions of related concerns.

Women workers' education in the eighties was very much influenced by international development action which highlighted the vital role of women in development. In particular, the UN Decade for Women increased attention and funding for women, especially women workers. Hence, the development of women's programs in community associations, government agencies and trade unions to improve women's status and participation and to integrate them into development.

Foreign funding for women's projects enabled the establishment of new women-centred groups which focused specifically on women workers, thereby opening up new spaces and generated innovative approaches to women workers' education. Attention accorded to women during this decade shaped the scope and focus of women workers education. The needs and education of women workers were expanded to include their gendered position as women and as workers. The influence of womens' perspectives further brought considerable shifts to incorporate the implications of women's practical and strategic needs in educational work as well as in its pedagogy.

Apart from similar educational efforts to integrate women into trade unions through trade union education, women's committees and special women's projects were implemented by trade unions. However the approach and emphasis remain very much the same. YWCEP developed into a self-help women workers' centre until 1987, emphasising consciousness-raising through collective action and organising in its educational approach. Before the end of the decade, two more informal groups and a registered women's organisation evolved to work with factory women workers.

The emergence of regional support groups like the Committee for Asian Women (CAW) and the Women Workers' Program of Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD) facilitated learning and education through exchange and regional training workshops. These regional efforts supported the legitimacy and strengthened new non-union efforts which were more effective than conventional trade union education in terms of its content focus and pedagogy.

The Internal Security Act was imposed by the Malaysian Government in 1987 to arrest and detain indefinitely without trial anyone suspect of threatening the national security of the country. Many of the efforts described above were directly affected. The crisis suppressed, paralysed and terminated most of the non-union women-centred groups.

By 1991, four newly constituted groups emerged again to work with women workers. However, only one such group continues to function today. For this surviving group, its focus on the particular group of women workers has also changed over the past few years. The sustainability of these groups have always been a problem. Apart from what is being done by trade unions, there is very little sustained efforts of women workers' education currently.

However, this is not to say that the concern and practice of women workers education no longer exist, though its extent is very much reduced. The nineties has been a period of review and renewal to explore new sites and strategies in light of the country's political forces that restrain education for social change. It is also a period of search to reframe and re-vision how women workers' education is to be approached and commenced from women's standpoints and lived experiences in ways that can empower them as women, as workers and as citizens. How can educational work enable factory women understand themselves, their experiences and feelings from their own standpoints in ways that enhance their capacities and potential? What methodologies and techniques can evoke the expression and reconstitution of experienced feelings, thoughts and silences? An underlying question is how educational work can be designed and undertaken to enhance women's empowerment.

A Critical Review

The work of unions, social service groups, grassroots groups and my own work with women workers over the past twenty years is briefly reviewed here in terms of objectives, content and methodology.

Most educational programs of unions and social service groups are formulated from the perspective of sponsors or providers and in terms of a deficit model (Wynne 1988). Assumed ignorance in relation to the women's roles as workers and home-makers, and assumed deficiency in terms of loose morals, underlie the practice of education as information, motivation and chastisement. The aims are to equip the women morally and functionally to behave in pre-defined ways, to impart awareness of their responsibilities and rights as workers, and to convey the benefits of unionisation.

The women are treated as target beneficiaries and are seldom consulted about or involved in the design of programs. Even where their participation is sought, organisational goals and priorities take precedence in structuring the curricula. Thus, a disjuncture exists between the contents and objectives of educational programs and participants' personally-felt concerns. In addition, organisational practices and programs tend to deny participants the space and authority to talk about their experiences. Far from gaining a voice and being helped to take control over their lives, the women are often silenced or made to feel stupid, with both stereotypes and the reinforcement of the experience of subjugation. This is particularly so in the case of unions which are not only gender-blind but tend to be patriarchal and derogatory of women's ways.

Although many programs emphasise the importance of participation, they ignore the practical obstacles and internalised intimations of inferiority (Bartky 1990) that make participation difficult. Current pedagogical practices rarely take on board women's subjectivities, their physical exhaustion and the disabling effects of being eternally in subordinate positions. Many women agree that they should and would like to participate actively but feel helpless about their lack of confidence to do so (Chan 1991). Most factory women in Malaysia do not have the experience of relating and speaking out in groups.

In grassroots groups, which are more women-centred, organisers are more conscious about the need to start from the issues, situation and interests of the women themselves. However, only certain aspects of factory women's lives are reckoned in current educational work: their common objective material conditions. Their subjectivities - the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions that make up their sense of themselves, their relation to the world and their ability (and inability) to act in that world are not taken on board (Crowley & Himmelweit 1992). Moreover, focusing on interest activities to attract and sustain participation have tended to reinforce stereotypes of traditional feminity and roles.

Education is practised in grassroots groups as awareness-raising about the exploitation and subordination of women.

Information about rights and leadership formation dominates the curriculum. The pedagogical practice is integrated into organising for daily survival to develop confidence, knowledge, consciousness and leadership through "learning by doing and by being involved". Learning is assumed to be acquired through interaction, participation, partaking in decision-making and taking responsibility in the various activities.

The primary objective of education is to get the women organised to meet their immediate needs, interests and increase their organisational participation. The assumption is that it is only when they are organised that they will have any power, and that they will become politicised in the process of mobilisation for action.

Although grassroots groups have a woman-centred approach, this takes the form of a women-only space for dealing with practical, mainly material needs. It rarely encompasses the subjectivities of the women, their individual personal encounters and feelings, their differences and diversity. Women workers are treated as a homogenous category. Personally-felt subordination and its effects are not tackled. The psychological and practical constraints on women are noted but not taken on board systematically in the pedagogy. Obstacles to women's learning and participation, how they make sense of their experiences are not discerned as educational work. Women's attributes, their privileged knowledge and ways of being are seldom used as pedagogical tools. For example, women's capacity to listen with empathy is hardly tapped as a resource. Women's strength and sensibilities are not recognised or mobilised for their own learning and mutual support. Activities and pedagogies aimed at developing a consciousness of the politics of gender are rare.

As for my own work, I also had focused predominantly on the objective conditions of women workers until exposure to writings on popular education and feminism which alerted me to the need to start from women's lived experiences and the incorporation of gynocentric values and practices. Programmes I conducted were aimed at fostering awareness about exploitation, rights and the need to be organized collectively. I concentrated on cognitive aspects: equipping the women with the orientation, confidence, analytical and action-oriented skills essential for committed involvement.

My mistake was to aim at conscientization for purposes of building a power or organizational base. I did not take into account sufficiently the women's experiences of powerlessness, inferiority and the disempowering experiences that had disabled them. Personally lived experiences were subsumed in pursuit of collective goals. I overlooked the internalized stereotypes, myths, feelings and beliefs which numb the agency of individuals. The learning that could be generated from daily experiences was not invoked to aid in the necessary processes of self-validation and empowerment.

I was aware of reluctance and passivity among the women, aware of the existence of a wealth of unspoken feelings, thoughts and experiences among them, but I did not know what to do about them. This was not an issue of concern among activist colleagues so I did not think it warranted special attention. In fact, I feared that dealing with personal situations might promote individualism and self-centredness. I also feared that I would be labelled "unprogressive". I assumed that if the women could be mobilised to be actively involved they would overcome their habits of passivity and silence in due course.

However, my work is now more informed by an understanding of the centrality of emotional well-being, an understanding derived originally from the role of emotions in my own life and experience of the mobilizing power of redefining and naming feelings from one's own standpoint. I have started to re-vision and re-position feelings in and as educational work. Specifically I explored how interactive, reflective talking can lead to an experience of release and of being able to make sense of emotional responses to the experience of subordination. I became increasingly convinced that it is necessary to include experienced emotional subjectivities in our educational agenda if we are concerned with education for empowerment.

ADDRESSING EMOTIONAL SUBORDINATION AND RECONSTITUTING SUBJECTIVITIES IN AND AS WOMEN WORKERS EDUCATION

Emotional sufferings and their effects, when unprocessed and repressed are disabling. Over time, the various negative definitions, stereotyping and abuses are internalised at great personal emotional cost and incapacitation. A process which allows the reconstruction of their experience from their own standpoint in which a new subject position is reconstituted to see anew and make sense of their situation, a situation which makes them the subject rather than the cause of the contradictions and pain they are experiencing is fundamental in women workers education. Dealing with the emotional and psychological intimidations of being oppressed, exploited and subordinated is fundamental to women's empowerment.

The debilitating effects of internalised oppression, commonly depicted as powerlessness and learned helplessness, have been a core concern of the women's movement (Steinem 1992). The problematic potential of lived experiences of subordination as a source of oppositional knowledge, has been the revolutionary core of feminist transformation (Lourde 1984). Jaggar (1992) pointed that emotion is an epistemological foundation of women's knowledge. Feminist practice emphasises the need to address the emotional welfare of women, whether in feminist therapy (Krzowski & Land 1988) in organising (Dominelli & Mcleod 1989), in popular education (PERG 1992) or programs for women's empowerment (Gutierrez 1990).

Various approaches have been experimented with, to facilitate the healing and recovery from experienced injuries and reconstitute women's subjectivities (see Barry 1989; Collins 1990; Davies 1992). Story-telling-sharing has been used extensively and effectively as a tool for consciousness-raising and mobilisation in the women and indigenous movements (Christ 1979; Buker 1987). Consciousness-raising is practised as a healing and recovery process which begins with renaming reality according to personal standpoints and experienced realities. This involves rejecting names and definitions which are not grounded directly to own experience, but because they have been adopted, have the effect of containing, controlling and constructing what one is or what does.

Women consciousness-raising groups have been a means for overcoming some of these psychological obstacles (Butler & Wintram 1991), exploring feelings as a "critical way of knowing" or "inner knowing", the source of true knowledge of the world for women living in a society that denies the value of their perceptions (Weiler 1991). Collective discussion of personal problems, often previously assumed as the result of personal inadequacies, leads to a recognition that what have been experienced as personal failings are socially produced contradictions and inflictions shared by many women in similar situation. The power of redefining and naming feelings and experiences from one's own standpoint have been proven to be powerful to help change perceptions and subjectivities. This process of discovery and recovery, lead to a reinterpretation of one's experience and self-definition instead of allowing the self to be constructed by others.

Within feminist discourse, voice and speech are metaphors for women's self-definitions (Collins 1990), countervailing the constructions of others. Indeed, moving from silence to voice has been shown to reclaim what has been denied and dismissed. It is to assert opposition to the dominant discourse. It is an act of profound personal and political significance, reinstating the suppressed or submerged knowledge and subject of the marginalized (see, for example, Daly 1978; Christ 1979; Rich 1975; Dale 1985).

I have used story-telling-sharing as education in small groups (see Chan 1996 for further elaboration) to evoke repressed voices for reconstructing subjectivities: the recollection and articulation of feelings, thoughts and associated with experienced subordination for the purpose of recovery, self-definition and self-reconstitution. Narration of lived experiences of anguish and pain which the women had been victimised and made to accept and had suppressed were encouraged. In this informal conversational mode, connections, new meanings and understandings emerge through listening, questioning and reflecting on each other's stories, and it is this process that contributes to the recovery of the women's authentic realities as they themselves have experienced them.

CONCLUSION

Women workers education must address the material-objective conditions as well as the subjective-affective dimensions. Most often educational work with women workers tends to focus only on their objective material conditions relating to employment and their position as worker. It is essential that silenced experiences of emotional subordination, powerlessness and inferiority have to be taken on board in and as educational work. Educational methodologies and strategies of action that can unfold, challenge and reconstitute women's sufferings of subordination and their subordinated position are vital. Story-telling-sharing as education can be a powerful method for women to "make-sense" of their repressed pains for self-recovery and reconstituting their subjectivities.

Addressing conscious and unconscious thoughts, unexpressed feelings and emotions that make up their sense of themselves, their relation to the world (their inability to act) are an essential agenda (BUT NOT THE ONLY) for women. Although emotional suffering is only ONE dimension of women's subordination, it is a critical agenda in women workers education.

Endnotes

1. This is not to say that the women are entirely passive victims. Side by side their deeply buried emotional suffering, is a seed of resistance. Their stories resonate with both vulnerability and strength, shuttling between distressed anxiety and resilience, submission and subtle defiance, incapacity and resourcefulness.

2. Subjectivity constitutes the individual´s sense of self, thoughts, emotions, modes of understanding the world, the sense of individuality, uniqueness, identity and continuity, and the reflexive awareness for these things (Usher, 1989). It refers to the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of self, and her ways of understanding her relation to the world (Weedon, 1987).

REFERENCES

Ackerman S. 1984. The Impact of Industrialisation on the Social Role of Rural Malay Women in *Hing Ai Yun et al. (ed): Women in Malaysia. KL: Pelanduk Publications. pp40-60.*

Barry K. 1989. Biography and the Search for Women's Subjectivity. *Women's Studies International Forum 12(6). pp 561-577.*

Bartky S. L. 1990. *Femininity and Domination Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression.* New York: London.

Buker E. 1987. Storytelling Power: Personal Narratives and Political Analysis. *Women and Politics (3).*

Butler S. & Wintram C. 1991. *Feminist Groupwork*. London: Sage Publications

Chan L. H. 1996. Talking Pain: Educational work with "Factory Women" in Malaysia. in *Walters S. & Manicom L: Gender in Popular Education*. London: Zed Press.

Chan L. H. 1991. Reflections of an Organiser in *Many Paths, One Goal: Organising Women Workers in Asia. Hong Kong: Committee for Asian Women*

Christ C. 1979. Spiritual Quest and Women's Experience in Christ C & Plasskow J (eds): *Woman Spirit Rising : A Feminist Reader in Religion. San Francisco*: Harper and Row.

Collins P. H. 1990. *Black Feminist Thought. Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*. London: Unwin.

Crowley H. & Himmelweit S. 1992. *Knowing Women: Feminism and Knowledge*. Milton Keynes: Polity Press in association with The Open University.

Daly M. 1978. *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Davies B. 1992. Women's Subjectivity and Feminist Stories. in Ellis C & Flaherty M (eds): *Investigating Subjectivity. Research on Lived Experience*. London: Sage Publications.

Dominelli L. & McLeode E. 1989. *Feminist Social Work*. London: Macmillan.

Grossman R. 1979. Women's Place in theIntegrated Circuit. South East Asia Chronicle. No.66. *Pacific Research 9(5-6) pp2-17.*

Gutierrez L. 1990. Working with Women of Color: An Empowerment Perspective. *Social Work* March.

Jaggar A. 1992. Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology in Garry A & Pearsall M.. (eds): *Women, Knowledge and Reality*. N.York: Routedge and Chapman Hall.

Krzowski S. & Land P. 1988. *In Our Experience: Workshops at the Women's Therapy Centre*. London: The Women's Press.

Lourde A. 1984. *Sister Outsider*.Trumansburg, New York: Crossing Press.

Perg 1992. *Women Educating to End Violence Against Women*. Toronto: Popular Education Research Group.

Rich A. 1975. For a Sister. in *Poems: Selected and New, 1950-1974.* New York: W.W. Norton.

Steinem G. 1992. *Revolution From Within. A Book of Self-Esteem*. London: Little, Brown and Company.

Usher R 1989. Locating Experience in Language: Towards A Poststructuralist Theory of Experience. *Adult Education Quarterly 40 (1). pp 23-32.*

Weedon C. 1987. *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Weiler K. 1991. Freire and a Feminist Pedagogy of Difference. *Harvard Educational Review. 16(4). pp449-474.*

Wynne B. 1988. *Knowledge, Interests andUtility*. Paper presented at the Science Policy Support Group Workshop. Lancaster University.

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR THE FRAME OF GENDER TRAINING IN POLITICAL AND TRADE UNION FIELDS

Miriam Berlak

In the analysis of the development of women's educational projects, we believe it is important to highlight some vital points that conform to the projects' theoretical frame. This analysis is important, because the activities from and for women are actually conforming a vital part of the work of many international organizations .For this reason, we should look into the objectives and main basic view points of these projects. The projects of support and education for women should be framed and related with the following aspects :

I. STRENGTHENING THE DEMOCRACY CONCEPT IN THE SOCIETY AND ITS EXERCISE AT AN INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The gender claim, in any of the theoretical frames in which it is expressed (related to the equality of women and their leveling in the institutional partipation or in the achievement of equal opportunities) are claims that tend to deepen the context and the exercise of democracy in several ways:

- First visualizing and then trying to change the authoritarian and subordinated relations underlying in the concept of traditional democracy, which excludes by omission an important part of the population from the decision making levels.

- Questioning women discrimination will lead to transform other subordinating situations occuring during a specific historical period , which aims at a project of global society transformation which includes several collective groups.

At the same time, the deepening of democracy has other effects : (a) the "visibilization" of women in the institutions has a qualitative and quantitative effect on society; (b) the presence of women in the institutions has an internal effect inside the organization that tends to integrate the gender perspective in the institutional contents, including themes that dilute the traditional division between the public and the private matters; and (c) women's presence brings about changes in the way the organization operates, questioning the traditional ways of management

II. DISCUSSION AND REELABORATION OF THE CONCEPT OF CITIZENSHIP

The claim for an increasing women participation brought questions over the concept of citizenship that has gone through many stages in different historical processes. Traditionally, the concept of citizenship is an universal and equality concept that refers to the relation of the civil society and the State. All citizens are equal before the law and have the same rights to vote and be elected . However, the concept of citizenship began to be questioned in several ways:

1. The reality of our society shows limits in relation to the extent of the citizenship concept. Who are considered citizens? Who have real and concrete possibilities for exercising the right of citizenship? All these matters are beginning to be questioned, taking in consideration the actual and increasing exclusion of many groups in our society. The poverty of these groups lead them to isolation.

2. Secondly, the citizenship concept may have more or less strength depending on the ways it is exercised. How far may different groups actively participate in the exercise of citizenship , considering it more than the right to vote ?

Actually the behavior of the citizen is each day more related to the "consumer". The role of the mass media increases this aspect. Today the citizen buys and consumes. Their possibility of exercising citizen control is done by "buying" or not buying, products or candidates, and not by being an active member of a project.

The universal and egalitarian idea of the concept, supposes equal conditions to exercise the citizenship for all citizens, notwithstanding their different backgrounds regarding their possibilities to participate in public matters. The concept of equal opportunities claimed by many women groups set in motion several governmental measures. This concept has two different meanings [1]:

- equal recognition for equal capacities, which means the same possibilities for men and women;

- equal start point, means to equalize the initial conditions of every citizen so as to obtain an equal access level. This is related to the measures of positive discrimination which tends to repair the unequal historical and social conditions of the "structural discrimination" that affects some groups of our society, specially women".[2]The only way to reach equality between different groups is to treat them on a different way, taking into consideration their specific characteristics. The equality demands requires different treatments regarding their differences.[3]

In the traditional citizenship concept , equality is related to the right to choose, which basically is endorsed by law for everybody. This belongs to the concept of universal democracy. The organized women groups and other groups have a more global understanding of this concept. For women, the concept of citizenship is not limited to the traditional aspects. At an International Seminar for leading political women in the southern part of South America[4], the concept of citizenship includes the following issues:

- exercise of rights and duties;
- guarantee of equality in the exercise of rights;
- establishment of new rights;
- be part of the social system;
- to be able to participate in decision making;
- participation in public matters; and
- to guarantee the participation honoring the differences and pluralities.

3. All the above mentioned means an enlargement of the citizenship concept.That means the social imperative to include as public matters some invisible aspects not assumed as debate themes in society, but being accepted in public discussions, should be included as matters of State policy.This process starts with the appearance of new social actors, that recognizing collective rights, organize themselves to defend these rights. They appear as social movements around the individual interests of the people that form the actor, or they represent the interests that affect society as a whole. They are not part of the traditional organizations that represent interests such as political parties, trade unions, etc. These type of organizations do not assume the interests of these new social actors. Therefore, they try to include their issues in

the political agenda outside the traditional organizations.

Taking this into consideration we may say that the traditional organizations have been inadequate to support and represent these differences. This situation leads to the appearance of new legitimation forms of interests in different action areas of the civil society. Their aim is to redistribute the power from the political to the civil society, through the legitimation of their claims. These collective groups, starting from their specific goals, build interests that may be generalized and legitimizes them as political subjects[5]. At the beginning, these new social actors acted beyond the traditional political institutions and the State.

Anyway, there has been some relation and, in some way, articulation between these social movements and the traditional organizations. Women have been and are a vital engine of this process. There has been an important debate about the relation between the women´s movement and the women organized in political parties and trade unions.This relation is not easy. The main difficulty is the articulation between the party identity or the worker´s claims with the gender´s identity. It was promptly recognized that the absence of women in the traditional public places made it difficult to articulate women demands, even if the pressure of the women´s movement succeeded in promoting some women issues in the public agenda.

The issue of greater participation in public matters, introduced the gender discussion in the traditional institutions (political parties, trade unions). In this discussion women began to erase the boundaries between public and private affairs. The consequences of this action is still not evaluated inside these institutions. An analysis should be done on the impact of the women ´s quota beyond the numerical aspect and the visibility of women. The discussion about the "quality" of women enabled to fill this percentage of spaces gained with the quota is a priority for the articulation between the women´s movement and the political and union organizations.

III. UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORKING WORLD AS A BASIC PART OF MEN AND WOMEN'S EVERYDAY LIFE, RELATED TO THE EXERCISE OF CITIZENSHIP IN AN INTERACTIVE SOCIETY

The focus of this analysis is centered on the trade unions, but it can be used to study political parties as well. The issues we are going to point out are relevant in different women capacitation levels, but here we will deal with trade union capacitation.

The low participation level in union life (which is even lower in the case of women), is a main labor union problem, which is mainly caused by the little concern trade unions have with their members' every day problems, specially now that the unions are facing great difficulties in the traditional power areas, such as collective bargain and their possibility to succeed with their claims.[6]

Changes in the working world confront the unions with difficult challenges :

- modification in the profile of the traditional trade unions member, due to the changes in the work organization , with the introduction of new technologies and the organization of production.
- the weakening of the traditional trade unions, in relation with the possibility of traditional claims as salary negotiations and the changes in the negotiation modalities.

Different experiences showed us the increasing challenges faced by trade unions where trade unions have to recreate their space of representation and participation, which means:

- to consider the trade union as the workers' representation space of men and women, taking into consideration their differences and particularities, including their own necessities related to the dynamic situation of workers relations. This urges us to consider different aspects as the gender, in the traditional union action of defending the workers rights and fighting for worthy working conditions.

- to fulfill the union actions that tend to revalue the workers as human beings and as citizens, considering aspects directly related with the workers life outside the factory or the office. This includes family and community life erasing the limits between private and public matters.

Training tends to strengthen trade unions by :

- greater participation recognizing the gender characteristics (regarding women);

- qualitatively better capacitation that considers and supports the worker's capacity to defend and exercise of their citizen rights; and

- the acceptance of new demands that, articulated with other societal sectors, brings forth a new type of non traditional subjects for union actions.

SOME METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF WOMEN TRAINING

The impact of these challenges over the training covers not only the subjects but also the methodological proposal, that must allow the systematic consideration of the workers' life experience, considering the social character of these experiences. Even if the experiences are individual, they develop in social and political conditions, structures and relations that are the product of the development of society. The analysis and systematization of these experiences can not be made on a traditional way, nor can we consider this training as a substitute adult education. The aim is to form real individuals. From the methodological point of view and in relation with the contents, it has to be considered as a political and cultural training.

Training is certainly a learning process, in which people qualify and learn new knowledges and skills. But it is also a formation process in which people become aware of their common interests and discover their conditions, wishes and needs as well as the necessity for a collective action[7].

The experience as the base for training processes.

In adult education, and specially when working with women, the individual experience is a fundamental base and a very important fact for the learning process. Everyone has their own experience framed in an historical and cultural context. It is therefore important to understand the social character of the experience and to try to determine tendencies originating in people's every day living. Generally, the action has to be preceded by an analysis of the situation that comes from an individual experience or from subjective estimations (either accepted or rejected) by the group.

At the beginning of any critical work we situate the awarness of what we really are, which means a "recognize yourself" attitude. The historical process , as a result, has left footprints in the human being, without the benefit of a full inventory. Therefore, the first step to be taken is to do this inventory[8]

It is necessary to take into consideration in the learning process the analyses of the different stages people go through when they recognize themself in order to built their "inventory" .

It is necessary to rescue the common aspects of the individual experiences. The consideration of the individualities contributes to an analysis that strengthens the learning process and allows a further growth with the corresponding changes and adaptations to the reality.

The link of these processes with the possibility or the need for changes produces resistance. All changes have constructive (to do) and destructive (to abolish) aspects. The possibility to accept these changes and the new values and rules related to these changes is only possible by introducing new processes and ideas that have to be accepted individually and collectively. If this process is not monitored, we may stay in "the diagnostic" stage, in the accounting of problems and situations. We have to take into consideration that any change produces crisis in the way of solving problems that each individual person and even more the institutions, have as a pattern of work and survival. This pattern is part of its culture and is based on previous experiences.

In the specific case of women the construction of a collective body contains the "horizontality" risk. The search of equality sometimes leads women to consider themselves identical to each other, making it difficult to recognize the need of a leadership for the action.

The characteristics and quality of this leadership is still matter of discussion.

The visualization as a way and method of capacitation

We will here consider visualization in its broader meaning: perception and assimilation through images, written ideas, in general any action or product of an activity that is apprehended through eyesight. The visualization as a way (and method) of training goes far beyond the simple presentation of images. The main part of it, is the production of these images, putting special attention on this producing process (drawings, collages, written ideas, etc). This visualized production may be individual or team work, but it will , nevertheless, lead to a process of collective construction.

A second aspect of methodological importance will be the interpretation or understanding of the images, the written ideas or the drawings by the group. The visualization carries us to the analysis of the speech (in this case visual) and to the understanding and general agreement of the visual formulation or to the discussion of it as part of the process of team work.

We are considering several simultaneous processes :

- from the individual to the collective,
- from the subjective experience, the group infers tendencies, characteristics that may be objectivated and accepted as their own reality,
- in the collective explanation of the reality, a collective valoration of this reality is implicit (or explicit). This leads the group action into two possible directions : either to maintain or to change reality.

The final aim of the training is not only to analyse problems (diagnostic) but also to lead an institutional action to promote changes. The women´s capacitation, with a gender point of view, questions the traditional social and institutional activities (the content and the forms of them) and brings new problems in relation with :

- the institutional resistance
- the articulation of the gender claims in the institutions
- the conceptual discussion of gender between women
- the creation of new ways of management from the women

Finally we may say that the gender capacitation aims at a reelaboration of the power concept in all its manifestations, and in an institutional construction based on this reconceptualization of power that crosses all the levels of social network.

This concept of gender capacitation leads to a conceptualization of power or theory of power for women , sharing the point of view of the dominated people. We are not refering to the conceptualization of power over women, that would include the domination of women as another variable to be considered. This implies to recognize and consider the capacities and abilities of women (given in specific historical and cultural conditions) for a potential change of the power relations, aiming to strengthen the women as a group and not reinforcing the power for some who "arrive"[9]

This capacitation tries to develop the understanding of the differences between women as part of a theory of power for women. This reconceptualization of power should consider other groups in situations of marginalization and subordination, with whom it is possible to act together, building a new understanding of society that accepts the differences. The limit of a theory of power for women is given by the broad and universalist concept that women pretend to question.

Endnotes

1. Sartori, Giovanni 1996, Elementos de Teoria Politica, Madrid, Alianza de 1992, pag.89-99 cit. En *Igualidad, Obligacion del Estado, Derecho de Todas las Mujeres, CDE/FES, Asuncion, p.17 y sig.*

2. Rigat-Pflaum, Maria (comp), 1993 Equiparacion de la Mujer en Alemania, FES, Buenos Aires, p. 15.

3. Astelarra, Judith, La Igualdad de Oportunidad Como Condicion de la Democracia Moderna, cit. En *Ingualidad, Obligacion del Estado*, op. Cit.p. 18.

4. Conclusiones del V Foro Cono Sur de Mujeres Politicas, Iguazu, 1995, organizado por la Fundacion Friedrich Ebert.

5. Filgueira, Nea, 1990. Exclusion de las Mujeres del Sistema Politico Institutional en Mujer y Poder en los Margenes de la Democracia Urugzaya, Conclusiones del Seminario, FESUR.

6. Rosenzvaig, Adriana, 1996. Proyecto Regional: Sindicatos: Representacion, Participation, Articulacion con Otras Organizaciones de la Sociedad Civil, Fundamentos, Asuncion.

7. DGB-Bildungswerk Nds., 1990. Mittel und Methoden in der Politisch-Kulturellen Bildung, Hannover, 1990 p. 8 and ss..

8. Gramsci, Antonio, 1967. Philosopie der Praxis, Frankfurt, p.130 cit. In DGB, Bildungswerk Nds. op.cit., p. 159.

9. Harstock, Nancy, (n.d.). Foucault Sobre el Poder ?Una Teoria Para Mujeres?, Mimeo, pp.30-31.

NEGOTIATING AND CREATING SPACES OF POWER:

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND CITIZENSHIP IN CAMBODIA

Nanda Pok

Cambodia is a small but beautiful country full of natural resources where everybody would like to get their hands on to reap the benefits. And for over the past twenty years, it has gone through five regimes: before 1970, the Monarchy regime (dictatorship); 1970-1975, the Republican regime; 1975-1979, the Communist regime (Pol Pot); 1979 - 1993, the Socialist regime (State of Cambodia); and 1993 up to the present, the Constitutional Monarchy (The King reigns but does not govern).

I am certain that all of you know that Cambodia is a country that had gone through war for over two decades. While the word "killing fields" made my country known all over the world, it has remained a nightmare for all of us Cambodians.

During this period, many of the educated (mostly men) people were killed and many women were left behind to take care of the children. From being housewives with very little of education or sometimes no education at all, women had to provide for the family. Through these harsh and quick changes, Cambodian women struggled to survive and went on with their lives with pain and grief.

Today, the political situation in Cambodia remains so unstable and unpredictable. Violence still persists as a way to show power and to get revenge, and of course, there are some people who always took this opportunity to get rich.

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

The latest statistics from the Ministry of Interior shows that the total population is 10.8 million, of which women consist 52% which is slightly more than half of the total population.

Women were given the right to vote and to stand for office since 1947 but it was only in 1958, that we had the first and only woman elected as member of parliament.

At the general election in May 1993 organized by UNTAC, 54% of women cast their votes. Yet even though the percentage of women voters was higher than men, women comprised only 5% of the total candidates in the twenty political parties fielded for that election. Furthermore, out of the 120 members to the National Assembly, only 5 or 4% are women. Since then, however, through governmental reshuffles the number of women in the parliament has increased to 7 (6%).

After the Constitution was adopted in September 1993, the elected members of the parliament formed a very **unique government,** led by TWO PRIME MINISTERS , where the newly formed government does not include a single woman in a cabinet of 25 ministries and secretariats. While there are 5 women under-secretaries of state, they are not considered as members of the cabinet as they are political appointees. It was considerate of the newly formed Royal Government to establish a Secretariat of Women's Affairs, but it was very unfortunate for Cambodian women because the person who named to be the Secretariat of State of the department is a **man.** So, Cambodia has no woman as member of the Council of Ministers.

AT THE PROVINCIAL OR LOCAL LEVEL

Cambodia is divided into 22 provinces and each province is headed by a provincial governor with 3 or 4 deputy governors depending on the provinces.

These governors and deputy governors are appointed. We have no woman governor but only one deputy governor for the whole country.

At the District level, there are 175 districts through out the country, where there are only two women as district chiefs and four women as deputy chiefs. At the Commune level, there are 1558 communes, and we have about ten women as commune chiefs and deputy chiefs.

The representation of women in decision making positions is obviously very low. Even at the local level, very few women are in decision-making positions. In one way, this reflects male leadership low commitment and consequently, absence of political will to promote women and their issues. It is the fact that most Cambodian women have lower education. This is due, in part, to the cultural stereotype that limits women to stay home, to do housework and take care of children. Another problem is the lack of resources, knowledge, skills, and financial support which the women have to face up to.

After Beijing, the Royal Government of Cambodia upgraded the Secretariat of State of Women's Affairs to the Ministry of Women's Affairs which was **supposed to be led by a woman.** Two women have been appointed to be the Minister and the other as Secretary of State respectively since January 1996, but the National Assembly has not been able to put that on the agenda to vote on. When asked about this, they said that there were other priority issues that need to be discussed first, and some said that they are concerned that it may not pass.

Our women's group is still lobbying the National Assembly to put that on the agenda to be voted on, but they are all now off session.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

Currently, there are about 300 NGOs in Cambodia. Among those, only four organizations are working on promoting women's participation in politics. These are:

1. Women For Prosperity or WFP is a local, non-governmental organization which works with government, political parties, and other NGOs. It focuses on training to empower women in the exercise of their rights, on equal terms with men, through leadership and economic development. Our "women leadership training" is designed specifically for women who have attained some degree of success in their work place and who have demonstrated leadership abilities to become future leaders. The objective is to strengthen their skills and knowledge, and also to give them a broader picture of information of what was going on inside as well as outside of the country which related to politics. WFP also has another program called "women participation in public affairs" which was formally known as "women participation in politics". This program seeks to encourage and identify women who may be interested in taking on active leadership roles through political participation. We train them on basic management guidelines and skills that foster desires to run for office; on enhancing the quality of their campaigns; on increasing their visibility; and on how to materially benefit from the causes and images of women as equal partners in the political areas as well as in other fields of local and national life.

2. Women Media Center is a local, non-governmental organization which works with media campaign, television, radio, video production and information.

3. Khmer Women Voice Center is a local, non-governmental organization which works mostly on research and advocacy.

4. International Republican Institute is an international organization which works mainly with political parties.

Cambodia will soon organize two elections, if every thing will be in place, such as the election law, political party law, the supreme council of magistracy, and the Constitutional Council. We are suppose to have a local election to elect the commune head in 1997 and a national election in 1998. Cambodian women are now preparing for that and willing to challenge their party's leaders for nominations. We, the NGOs have requested the government to set up a quota of 30% for women candidates in the law which have not been decided upon yet because the election law is being drafted and has not been passed yet.

Women feel that since our Constitution states very clearly that both male and female have the same equal rights to be involved and intervene in political affairs of the state, therefore, we would like to try to exercise this rights by preparing ourselves to be actively involved in the up coming elections whether we will run as candidates and/or choosing the leader where we feel will work for the benefit and interest of women and children. We know that our votes mean more than just a piece of paper, and that women can make the difference. We want to prove that we are worth to be recognized and to deal with, and that women and men together make democracy works. Each of us has the same responsibility and there is no task that can only be performed by men or by women alone. The only thing that we Cambodian women wish and hope for is a peaceful election.

At the future election, NGOs will play an important role in monitoring the election. We have formed a coalition called "A Coalition for Free and Fairs Election" in short (COFFEL), and another coalition called "Committee for Free and Fair Election", in short (COMFREL).

THE GENDER GAP

Since this conference is on "Promoting the empowerment of women through adult learning", I would like to share a little about the state of women in the field of education. Cambodian girls are underrepresented in the school population at all levels except kindergarten, and the rate of under representation widens at each successive level of schooling. Strictly speaking, the term "gender gap" refers to the difference between male and female enrollment rates. There is no gender gap at the preschool level, where girls actually outnumber boys by a slight margin, but in primary school the proportion of boys exceeds that of girls by a margin of ten percentage points. This gap rises to 58 points at the upper secondary level and 70 points in higher education.

Relatively few women have access to vocational training, most of which is devoted to traditionally male fields such as radio repair or electronics. Government as well as NGOs have designed programs where women are encouraged to participate, but even though women participate in those programs, they still have work to do at home which create more work load on them.

ADULT LITERACY

The cumulative effects of the school-level gender gap on the adult population are devastating. The United Nations Development Programme estimated that the average adult woman in Cambodia has had only 1.7 years of schooling versus 2.3 years for adult males. The overall literacy rate is now estimated at 35 percent, 48 percent for males and 22 percent for females.

Several explanations are possible: drop out of girls from school, culture, long distance from home, poverty, but one of the most important factor is that Cambodia has several examinations where women tend to drop out of school automatically if they fail the examination, and this might have to do with cost of bribes given to school officials to assure success on these examinations. Perhaps parents of girls are less willing to put out such money at the higher level. Whatever the reasons, though, the net result is that girls enjoy relatively few of the fruits of the Cambodian education system (Reference from Using Both Hands, Women and Education in Cambodia, ADB, 1995).

All of the above issues that have been raised here have been addressed to the government by NGOs as well as Government themselves. The NGOs in Cambodia are very active , and they are the driving force to make the government well aware of the situation and make policies according to the needs of the people. The government of Cambodia themselves are trying to correct this trend, but they have limited human resources and funding to make things better for every one.

CONCLUSION

Cambodia is like a new baby that is just learning how to walk because we have just come out from a long devastating war that has destroyed everything including the trust among our own people. Nevertheless, we are struggling hard and we know that we are not that far behind our neighboring country in terms of women's activities, but we also realize that we still have to work hard against all odds, be united, form strong network, gain higher education, so that we can live freely, happily, with respect and recognition, and most importantly as equal partners to our male counterparts.

WOMEN AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:
Challenges from the National Coalition of Nicaraguan Women

Malena de Montis

Introduction

To speak of women´s political participation implies reflecting on power, ethics, the citizenry, governability, democracy, human rights, policy and politics. These concepts, however, are all coined in masculine imagery by Men and erected into a universal model of what is human, with majority voice and presence in the important spaces of power in the public sphere, considered the exclusive stage for political participation. These spaces of power allude to a protagonistic function and exercise by men and women, and that we women live in direct relationship to our condition and situation of gender subordination.

A new form of political activity, which includes men and women in terms of equality, assumes the deconstruction and redefinition of these basic concepts that govern the world of politics. This new form assumes the meeting of the public, private and intimate spheres on political turf, in contrast to the current situation which makes the public sphere dominant.

As the millennium draws to a close, domination and profit as an end in themselves are putting our planet in danger. The multiple relations of power that exist - between the countries of the North and the South, rich and poor, men and women, young people and old, ethnic groups and cultures, humanity and nature - are recreated in their alienation, violently increasing the misunderstandings, the abuse, the gulf between rich and poor, racism, misogyny and homophobia, the destruction of our resources, drugs, epidemics, fears and desperation.

Today´s dominant power groups spoil the potential for growth generated by the expansion of knowledge, technology and information in this century even though the possibilities exist to eliminate starvation, the deterioration of health in our bodies, illiteracy, the exploitation of children and other ills that prevent a full and dignified life for all men and women.

These groups also sap the potential for women´s participation in the political spaces, national and international, in which decisions are made and truly transforming agendas are defined. They largely negate our intelligence, skills and abilities, keeping them invisible and undervalued.

There is evidence that women can have a visible impact on political culture, decision-making styles and the definition of more inclusive agendas if we obtain a sufficient proportion of the spaces of power and if bridges and supports are created between them and women´s groups and movements.

Out of the exclusion that comprises the domestic/private sphere converted into destiny, and the transgression of fears, myths and beliefs that keep us captive, we women have achieved knowledge, developed various capacities, intuitions and sensitivities that are important to the development of a different political culture.

The road traveled by the movements of women and feminists in the world provides women a politically different vision and way of functioning, starting with the recognition of diversity and respect for the distinct realities and interests of their members.

In this document, I want to share with you some reflections and challenges that have been presented to us as women from the experience of the National Coalition of Nicaraguan Women (CNM), with the goal of achieving the "Power of Being Together" required for women´s effective intervention in the spaces of public power where decisions important to the growth of the world and its nations are made, as well as the transformation of the androcentric and coercive political culture.

The first part presents the experience of the National Coalition of Nicaraguan Women (CNM), formed in 1995, in trying to connect its development to the country´s broader political context. The second part presents a set of challenges for the future, based on our reflections on the CNM experience, proposing the need to go deeper into the link between the public, private and intimate spheres.

We start from the assumption that "we must attain the power of being together so that we women can be in important spaces of power in the public sphere and be really effective in eliminating all the forms of discrimination that we experience." For that, the deconstruction and reconstruction of the intimate sphere, where decisions are also made and one experiences living in self-esteem or self-image, cannot be postponed, since it, interwoven with the public and private spheres, encompasses the totality of existence.

It is the sphere of our subjectivity, of being and heart, of sentiments and affections, feelings and beliefs, insecurities and fears, behaviors, jealousies and competitiveness that impede the strengthening of our capacities for autonomous organization and participation, keeping us faithful to the patriarchal mandate of being our own and each others´ worst enemy as women.

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COALITION

A Some elements of Nicaragua´s political history

Politics in Nicaragua since its origins as a nation-state at the beginning of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century has been characterized by the influence of the caudillo or political boss figure, the concentration of power in men, the old two-party duality (Liberal/Conservative), the use of force and violence, corruption and the predominance of undemocratic forms. For almost 50 years (1937-1979), the country was ruled by a dynastic military dictatorship, which expressed the interests of the local propertied sectors and of the United States. It was overthrown in July 1979 by a revolution led by the Sandinistas.

In the period prior to the Sandinista revolution, women´s participation in the public sphere was minimal; it was concentrated in religious groups, in a few business or labor associations, and on a minor scale, in the governing liberal party, although held down by the primacy of masculine interests. It must be stressed, however, that already by the end of the 1940s, some women were beginning to mobilize around democratic demands to free political prisoners of the period. In response to that, the dictatorship organized shock lines, using women from its party - what were known as Nicolasian gangs. Yet, it was under the government of the Somoza dynasty that women got the vote, in the 1950s. It is, however, important to remember two elements which affected the granting of the vote to women: 1) the influence of the right-wing populist currents in the continent, for example Peronism from Argentina, which radiated out to the rest of the continent, and 2) in the national setting the need to increase the number of votes that would validate the rigged electoral races held in the country.

The Sandinistas were in power for 10 years, waging a military confrontation against forces supported by the United States during nearly the entire period. Sandinismo was characterized by a different class content than that of Somocismo, since middle sectors, even popular sectors, predominated around some structural transformations such as agrarian reform, the strengthening of the state´s role in the economy and the importance of popular power - represented by organizations controlled by the party in power.

In the revolutionary period women gained greater presence in the public policy-making space. We participated in the drafting of laws; we organized massively to participate in the affairs of the nation and public affairs - albeit under the control of political parties of a masculine coinage; and we collaborated in the war (on one side or another). All of these things made it finally possible for unfolding processes of transformation of our consciousness with respect to the condition and situation of subordination in which we women lived, as well as the achievement of some advances of our rights: the creation of the Women´s Institute, inclusion in the agrarian reform, etc.

By around 1984-85, small autonomous women´s groups began to emerge onto the public stage and put forward specific demands from women´s daily lives, with a marked skew toward the social. In an ascending spiral, these types of minimal demands gave way to the beginning of in-depth discussions about the character of women´s participation in decision-making spaces in the public terrain. At this same moment, the germ of the first feminist debates also flowered, accompanied by the emergence of a consciousness of self and for self, by women themselves.

The Sandinista period was not exempt from the use of force, violence, corruption, patrimonialism and the predominance of forms of undemocratic power "over others." These exclusionary and crushing forms prevailed in the policy-making styles and the exercise of power throughout the revolutionary government.

In 1990, in highly observed elections called by the Sandinistas, a conservative coalition headed by Violeta Barrios (de Chamorro) won office. Her government applied a neoliberal economic policy; a process of opening up to a greater division between the branches of state (executive, legislative, judicial and electoral); separation of the army and security forces from party interests; greater freedom of press and organization. Nonetheless, that process took place in the framework of a major worsening of the poverty situation and social exclusion of important grassroots sectors. While the period was characterized by the end of the war, a new type of violence was developed, one generated by the poverty of a restrictive democracy that excludes the great majorities.

The period of the Violeta Barrios government and the democratic opening that it fostered coincided with the emergence of a strong debate about the women´s movement, the need for its autonomy from the political parties and the role of feminism. That debate was accompanied by the flourishing and consolidation of a large number of autonomous women´s organizations, which constituted a new expression of the Nicaraguan women´s movement, in an open struggle for its specific immediate and strategic demands.

The Violeta Barrios government was also not exempt from the violence generated by the new and growing gulf between the rich and the poor, paired with corruption in the exercise and administration of public affairs, still today enthroned and prevailing.

In 1996, general elections were again held, which permitted one civilian government to make way for the election of another civilian government for the first time in many decades. There was again evidence of the tendency toward polarization and political caudillo schemes - strong political bosses - that had tripped up the advance of democratic processes and the formation of consensus around the issues that are urgent to the nation´s development. Political polarization is far from having ended; and corruption, clientelism and influence peddling continue recreating themselves.

B. *The Formation of the National Coalition of Women*

That is the context in which the National Coalition of Women was born, as an expression of the unitary desire of various Nicaraguan women, feminist and non-feminist, of varying ideologies and religious creeds, leaders of political parties and of autonomous women´s organizations, to promote equitable participation by women in the political tasks of our country, contributing new forms of political activity from our life experiences. It was the first exercise in Nicaragua of building national consensus around common objectives, making sure that differences would be a factor of growth in the collective consciousness.

For some of us, it makes up one more expression of the women´s movement, at the same time that it constitutes the major unitary effort between feminists and "feminines," of ideological convergence by the so-called "lefts," "centers" and "rights" ever fostered in the country.

At the end of 1995 and beginning of 1996 two women´s groupings - the Feminist Collective La Malinche (a grouping of intellectual women who represent a strong current of theoretical development in the country) and the Women´s Forum (a recently formed organization of women of various ideological and political leanings) - promoted and organized three national encounters with participation by women of distinct party, religious, social and economic affiliations, with the aim of debating the possibilities of having an effective women´s presence in the electoral process.

In these encounters, in which some 70-80 women leaders participated, a space for dialogue and the construction of significant agreements was opened, which led to the preparation of a Minimum Agenda through a participatory methodology that implied broad consultations with women at all levels. Many other women in addition to the initial ones subscribed to this Minimum Agenda in an act of constitution and public presentation of the CNM held on March 8, 1996 in the Olof Palme Convention Center, the largest in the country.

The Minimum Agenda (AM), which constitutes the basis of activities in the CNM during the electoral campaign, is made up of an ethical framework and four parts referring to demands concerning: a) Politics and the State; b) Socio-cultural; c) Economic and d) Labor-Juridical.

The ethical framework of the AM makes explicit the recognition, respect, tolerance and solidarity required among women with the goal of finding points of coincidence that allow a transformation of the unequal power relations between men and women; the undertaking of a joint struggle for the defense of our rights and the transformation of the traditional policy-making styles; the valuing and respect for the personal dignity of the women who intervened in the pact; a recognition of the diversity of leadership and a commitment to act with political, intellectual and financial honor, defending the respect for individuals and rejecting the use of personal discrediting as a tactic of political competition. This ethical framework prepared by women emphasizes that corruption is absolutely incompatible with the ethics we promote, and commits us to foster the development of a national consciousness that rejects corruption.

Finally, it contemplates a commitment by the women in the pact that those who get public posts should promote the inclusion of the agenda points in their particular political programs, and be accountable to the CNM regarding their fulfillment of the commitments acquired.

In the other four sections of the AM, 28 points were addressed in which we women obtained consensus, among which are: guaranteeing women´s human rights, playing a role in the modernization of the state and promoting women´s negotiating capacity, raising the governmental Women´s Institute to the rank of ministry, housing programs in favor of women heads of family, programs for the old, provision of reproductive health services, health and education policies with a gender focus, macroeconomic policies that guarantee equal opportunities for men and women in access to land, deeding of properties, etc.

The AM was negotiated with all political parties participating in the electoral race - except for the Liberal Alliance, which refused to dialogue with the women of the CNM and ended up winning the race - through meetings that we had with presidential candidates and other groups, thus projecting nationally a debate that had been so far limited to the sphere of women´s own groups.

In addition to preparing the AM, the CNM also pushed for a series of public activities in the framework of women´s participation in the electoral process which included press conferences and television, radio and written press debates. The high point of all these activities inserted into the campaign came with the holding of an event on August 23, 1996 in the La Salle High School Gymnasium in Managua, attended by about two thousand women candidates (of an approximate total of 7,000 women candidates for all elected posts from all over the country in full electoral competition), as well as women from diverse groupings. In that event the women candidates and subscribers to the AM publicly manifested their willingness to defend the consensus reached in the CNM over existing ideological and political differences.

The CNM also included minimum accords for its functioning. We agreed to create work commissions in which those in the pact joined voluntarily. They were of a transitory nature, without a stable quorum and based on the volunteer system, and were in turn coordinated by an organizing commission mainly made up of the founding women who functioned as initial promoters of the space and an executive secretary to provide follow-up to the commissions´ decisions. Parallel to that, steps were initiated to constitute departmental chapters of the CNM.

It is necessary to point out that these actions were held with extremely scarce financial resources, resting fundamentally on the enthusiasm and firmness of will of the women in the pact. During the electoral process, the small opening that the political parties demonstrated toward the candidacies of women, the scant support that they provided and the CNM´s own lack of resources translated into a weak presence by women candidates in the media, their exclusion from numerous public acts and similar events.

Although the CNM represented a space to the women candidates that provided projection and backed their efforts during the electoral process, its recent constitution and the material poverty for its activities prevented it from carrying out a more systematic campaign, have a greater presence or hold more activities that would improve the projection of the women during the electoral period. Furthermore, the

CNM´s internal functioning was hindered by some of those same vices that we want to eradicate: protagonism, rivalries, opportunism and clientelism copied from the masculine political styles, and exacerbated by the lack of greater depth in the debate about the specific problems of women and their autonomy, as well as the prevalence by which some participating women were subjected to party structures. Adding to these, the weaknesses accompanying the existing construction of feminine identity (susceptibilities, mistrust, jealousies, competitiveness, crying, shouting, etc.) made the process of advancing and consolidating a stronger organization with the capacity to quickly respond to the changing political situation in which we were immersed enormously difficult.

The most important accomplishment that should be highlighted in the work carried out so far in the CNM is the fact that women who have historically been not only ideological adversaries but literally political enemies and at times even armed opponents on the battlefield from different sides convoked, met and made possible the dialogue and political negotiation. In addition, it must be added that some consensus was obtained around the condition of women´s subordination and this was specifically registered in the AM. Furthermore, the CNM continues to exist, as a space of political pluralism of the broadest spectrum, in which we women continue, woven together in dialogue and the search for solutions to the problems of our insertion in the sphere of political power, alongside defining and learning new forms and styles of making policy and building leadership.

CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CNM AND WOMEN

A. *The New Political Context*

In the 1996 elections, which were won by the Liberal Alliance, we women lost spaces in the elected political posts. According to data supplied by the monthly bulletin Bolsa de Mujeres, we maintained only 10 of the 17 seats we had as National Assembly legislators in the 1990-96 period, 11% of the total, as well as 23 seats as alternates, 25% of the total. In the Central American Parliament, we have 25% of the full members and 30% of the alternates. In addition to the reduction of our numerical force in the legislature, women also lost the presidency and vice presidency of the Republic, gaining only 2 ministerial posts in the cabinet, as heads of the Ministry of Social Action and of Culture. Of 141 municipal governments in the country, we only got 6 women mayors for the Liberal Alliance and 4 for the FSLN, approximately 7%, as well as 26 women vice mayors, 18% of the total. In the judicial branch, only 3 of the 12 current justices are women. In the electoral branch, only 1 of the 5 full magistrates is a woman, and she occupies the presidency.

These figures show that we women have been losing our presence in the spaces of public power, a situation whose explanation is based partly on three important facts:

a. The women´s movement in Nicaragua was born under the sign of the revolution and civil war, Sandinismo vs. contra, which marked a profound "ideological" (left and right) and class stamp on its members. This was expressed in the difficulties encountered in initiating dialogues from the movement with the other women in the country and has prevented the consolidation of gender alliances among us, given the prevalence of the ideological party discourse.

b. The installation in 1990 of a democratic government of a conservative stripe and leaning toward a profound religious attitude, generated the beginnings of a process to restore patriarchal "moral and ethnical" values, which could not be counteracted due to the unconsolidated nature of our proposals. Added to the crisis of paradigms of the so-called Latin American left, this favored the resurgence of traditional politicians and their political methods.

c. The absence of consensus coming from the women themselves around ontological problems linked to the creation of consciousness for self has made it impossible not only to put forward new models of feminine identity or draw up proposals for changes in the construction of femininity, but even more fundamentally, it has prevented the consolidation of the "power of being together," which is indispensable for defining strategies that can have an impact on the handling of the intimate sphere in the national awareness.

Some of us who are feminists from the Autonomous Women´s Movement recognize great achievements in the road that we have traversed in relation to "social" activities: the importance of health, education, the definition of laws, the improvement in the standard of living, among others. Now we are urgently gambling on defining strategies for participating in the different branches of the state, on discussion, consciousness raising and a decision to act powerfully from these spaces. From these spaces, articulated with civil society, we are experiencing and defining new ways of relating to each other. In this regard, there is an overriding need to become aware that it is not enough to demand that those who are in power comply with our demands and our rights; it is necessary to be in power in order to fully incorporate the particular agenda of women - which of course includes the private and the intimate in the terrain of the political - into the national agenda.

We women of Nicaragua live in a political system in which the only way to aspire to the spaces of greater hierarchy is through the political parties, at a historic moment in which many of us think that they have to be transformed, enriched and accompanied by other possibilities to accede to these spaces of power, for example opening up the possibilities of running for all electoral posts by popular subscription, which is now only possible for the municipal government level. This reality makes it imperative to articulate the efforts to be carried out in the immediate future from the organizations of civil society with the efforts of the few women who still occupy positions of power in the state structures.

The emergence and rise to power in the recently held elections of the most recalcitrant part, in gender terms, of radical anti-feminist Liberalism represents an inescapable threat to the future and consolidation of the women´s movement and the defense of the achievements and conquests obtained previously.

In this framework it can be foreseen that the process of restoring patriarchal values will deepen and that important rollbacks will be attempted in the situation reached by women in the public spaces. An example of what this could mean is found in the attempts to convert the Women´s Institute into a organization of what is being called the Ministry of the Family, which would subsume the specific set of women´s problems, relegating them to their condition as mothers of family, guarantors of the care and education of the children.

The lack of commitments by this government with civil society in general and with the women´s movement in particular, beyond the electioneering speeches about promoting "national unity" (of a masculine cut, of course, but exclusionary toward women) threatens the survival of the movement´s various organizations and expressions.

B. Addressing the Intimate in the New Context

We have to recognize that, although women in Nicaragua have advanced a lot in clarifying and making proposals to achieve our rights in the public and private spheres, we have not made substantial progress in the intimate sphere of our subjectivity, which is also indispensable for achieving new forms of leadership and the "power of being together."

We are presented with the challenge of achieving greater comprehension of our interior world, knowledge of our inefficient behavior patterns and their necessary transformation into efficient behaviour patterns, as well as of the capacity to recognize our. own competence, recognition of our BEING, whose satisfaction permits us power, from the heart, to develop the confidence, the unity, the sorority, the pacts among ourselves. It is urgent to work to obtain the self-esteem necessary to feel ourselves individually powerful and to build unity: a new "power between" in contrast to the patriarchal "power over."

Power is everywhere, as Foucault says: in the media, laws, fashions, texts, hospitals, schools, speeches, family, knowledge, words, myths, beliefs, institutions, religions and of course our psyche, inside of ourselves; but its exercise and patriarchal leadership are also over us and within us, controlling, comparative, and smashing. In its shadow our identity as subordinates with low self-esteem is built in conformity with what suits men.

In addition, to strengthen and feed it, we copy that exercise of "power over" through a kind of "transversalism" that we live when we as women reproduce the styles of power that men practice, negating the potentiality, the skills and abilities that we are developing in the world of the private, even in our condition and situation as subordinates.

The non-recognition or equitable assessment of the differences, the strangeness between us, the low self-esteem and the transversalism mentioned above, make us live in function of the self-image required by our subordinated identity, which brings fights, competitiveness, jealousies, alienated affections and misunderstandings, thus limiting the possibility of unity and long-term pacts among us. Recognition of these knots constitutes the fundamental basis for the growth of consciousness that we women need to be powerful and to be in power to constitute ourselves.

In the search to reconstruct self-esteem, leading to the personal development of women and the construction of new leadership styles, it is fundamental to rescue these abilities, skills and counter-powers that result from our own subordinated condition to men. Counter-powers that are generated and develop mainly in the hidden world of the patriarchal household can be used in the search for a new alternative power.

Because we women are dazzled by the official powers, we do not make maximum use of or even become conscious of the "comparative advantages" of our obliging power.

Excluded from official power, we develop these counter-powers as mechanisms to gain influence. Among them, seduction, the use of sentiments, handling of guilt and our great capacity to attend to various things at the same time, which we always use in a hidden and subaltern fashion. The rediscovery of feminine identity as a subordinated identity passes through the recognition of these counter-powers, a condition and mechanism of power to be employed positively and explicitly within the proposition of creating an alternative to the controlling power of men.

The issue is to use affection as capacity, as an alternative to the depersonalized, rigid and aggressive power of men, as an efficient mechanism for influencing from a positive perspective. Control and aggressive domination should be faced with affection, seduction, personal charms, intelligence and elements of connection to generate a new type of human relations.

Another comparative advantage is in relation to the handling of guilt that we as women do, which should be transformed from blackmail into a "comparative advantage" through its conversion into an affectionate claim and call to responsibility.

We women have been created and educated to attend to several things at the same time. We resolve, we adapt ourselves, while the masculine agendas are inflexible. We live two or three roles at the same time - we are mothers, educators, we care for the health of our children and husbands, we are cooks, housekeepers, executives, workers, lovers, etc., such that men have been socialized to receive focused attention. This feminine capacity to attend to different issues simultaneously, which men have disqualified and designated as "dispersion," is nothing but one more of the "comparative advantages" of the subordinated feminine identity, which acquires major importance in periods of great demands that require a lot of flexibility in action.

The knowledge and assertive use of these "comparative advantages" permits us to rediscover and appreciate our identity, to strengthen our self-esteem, to visualize and build a new type of power and leadership, without competition, jealousy or rejection among women. A kind of unitary power, of all women, capable of pushing forward the profound transformations required to achieve a just and equitable society for people, in harmony with nature, in a new cosmic order where beauty, the joy of being a woman, the happiness of our men and children are preceded and accompanied by peace and love.

If we women work out of our own self-esteem, recognizing our diversity and particular specializations, if we assume that some of us have abilities for some things and others for others, we will feel like pairs, complementary; we can make pacts and achieve the power of unity. We can then be transparent, achieve the trust required among individuals, networks, NGOs and the different groups of women to exercise an alternative power that includes accountability, shared management and representative leadership.

We women have to develop confidence in ourselves. That translates, strategically, into accomplishing unity to put ourselves in first place; to overcome the fears, loneliness, suffering, self-complacency and self-compassion, jealousies and competitiveness that lack of self-esteem generate in us. It corresponds to us to develop our capacities to construct, learn, enjoy, support each other, accede to pleasure and stop just surviving miserably. It is urgent that we deconstruct subordination, overcome the "adoration" and servitude between genders. We must require of ourselves, from our intimate power and unity, that we clearly define the objectives and commitments to be met, marked in a discussion about what ethical principles to adopt.

The struggles of women, though they have achieved the recognition of many of their demands by the dominant, have not managed to reverse the situation in which we find ourselves today, in a difficult context due to the political positions of the current government. To finish, I want to insist that this new reality requires identifying, multiplying and accompanying the demands of BEING, with BEING in power, so that from there we can continue advancing, deciding and acting for the construction of a better world.

CHANGING MRS KHOSA'S REALITY:
The Challenge for Adult Education in South Africa[1]

Shirley Walters

South Africa is in transition to democracy from an authoritarian, colonialist, and apartheid past. It has been held up as one of the beacons of light in a world of the dog-eat-dog realities of globalized capitalism. A key question for feminist adult educators in the country is what should we be doing in order to enhance the possibilities for a more people-centered social and economic programme of transformation to succeed in South Africa at a political moment when global economies dictate neoliberal market-based policies as the only acceptable solutions? The assumption is made that it is only through a radical transformation which seeks "alternative development" which foregrounds human development, as elaborated by the South-based women's network DAWN,[2] that the position of the majority of women will change for the better.

Within this view, a gender perspective is crucial which means recognizing that women suffer the worst when human development is inadequate. As DAWN elaborates:

> *"A gender perspective means recognizing that women stand at the crossroads between production and reproduction, between economic activity and the care of human beings, and therefore between economic growth and human development. They are the workers in both spheres - those most responsible, and therefore with most at stake, those who suffer the most when the two work at cross purposes, and those most sensitive to the need for better integration between the two."* (p.21)

The implications of this understanding are that a gender perspective has to be integrated at the highest policy levels and that women need to be strengthened in order to be able to hold economic and political policies and systems accountable. In addition economic alternatives that women themselves have been creating need to be supported and strengthened. One way of assessing the prospects for the achievement of a gender sensitive, people-centered development in a particular context is to have one typical woman as a yardstick against which actions are measured. This I do throughout the text by introducing Mrs Khosa as an average South African woman.

Fundamental transformation is urgent as South Africa, among comparable middle-income developing countries, has one of the worst records in terms of social indicators (health, education, safe water, fertility) and amongst the worst records in terms of income inequality. Poverty in South Africa has a strong "race" and gender dimension. Nearly 95% of the poor are black, 5% are colored, less than 1% are Indian or white.[3] The kinds of realities that have to be transformed are captured in the following quote by Mrs Khosa (a pseudonym):

> *"My husband lost his job about five months ago...then two months ago I lost my job. We were desperate. There was no money coming in now....Now they've cut off the electricity and we're two months in arrears with rent. They're going to evict us, I'm sure, we just can't pay though. My husband decided to go to Jo'burg...I don't know where he is...Sometimes (the children) lie awake at night crying. I know they are*

crying because they are hungry. I feel like feeding them Rattex. When your children cry hunger-crying, your heart wants to break. It would be better if they were dead. When I think things like that I feel worse...I'm sick...I can't take my children to the doctor when they're sick because there's no money...What can one do? You must start looking. You can also pray to God that he will keep you from killing your children.[4]

As Mrs Khosa's experience shows, poverty in South Africa is linked with high unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, inability to pay for - or lack of access to - health care and basic services, disintegration of families, vulnerability, risk of homelessness, and sometimes despair. The burden is also greater on women than men, and children are the victims.

To turn around the poverty-stricken reality of 70% of the population will take both a long time, the political will and a great deal of resources. It is the ultimate challenge of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the government and adult education and training.

The RDP is an ambitious framework which aims 'to meet basic needs, develop human resources, build the economy and democratize the state and civil society'. Underpinning the RDP is a strong concern with redress, equity and economic development. As adult education and training is integral to social, economic, political and cultural development, it is centrally involved in the RDP and therefore implicated in its success or failure.

South Africa has reentered the global economy and is having to compete with workers around the world. The global restructuring is leading to increased poverty and exploitation of many people. South Africans can therefore not address injustice and inequality in isolation from communities in other parts of the world. For feminist adult educators and activists the South African case is not of parochial interest only. It provides the space to examine the political and social contexts within which women's learning occurs and to ask searching questions about the social purposes and the provision of adult education globally. We can do this while acknowledging that global similarities are rooted and shaped in national and historical uniqueness.

In this article I give preliminary suggestions as to priorities for feminist adult educators who wish to enhance the possibilities for a more radical social and economic programme to succeed which will improve the life chances of Mrs Khosa and others like her.

WHAT ARE PRIORITIES FOR ADULT EDUCATION?

1. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP)

While there has been widespread support for the RDP there is growing disquiet especially from the left that there is now too much emphasis on economic growth as opposed to development and redistribution. A new macro economic strategy has been accepted which foregrounds economic growth above meeting basic needs. Descriptions of problems and achievements of the RDP are beginning to emerge.

There are major contradictions in the RDP which is a national effort to both reconstruct and reconcile a national of very diverse interests. While it is too early to assess the RDP it is clear that at an ideological level it remains an extremely important instrument to legitimize the fight against poverty, inequality and injustice. A very important priority for adult education and training is to raise the consciousness of the broad population concerning the RDP and the critical contestation over paradigms of development that are imbedded within it. The RDP is committed to people-centered development - important questions to probe are "development for which people and to what end?"

Although the new Bill of Rights states that, "The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, color, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language, and birth", it is a fact that South Africa is a patriarchal, homophobic and racist society. Therefore, the ideals within the Bill of Rights will only be achieved through struggle of different interest groups to ensure that their rights become reality.

In South Africa there has been a very rich history of "struggle politics" over many decades. A vast array of civil society organizations played critical roles in the political transformation. During those years the connection between "the struggle" and "development" was not made. There is generally a very conservative notion of development which is often equated with the expectation of delivery of basic material goods and services.While there is this perception the possibilities for people-driven development are slim.

Adult educators can play a role in making the connection between the discourse of development and the discourse of struggle. It is essential that more and more people, particularly women, realize that to change their economic, social and political realities will still take concerted, collective actions by communities and groups. But whereas before civic actions were always directed against the apartheid state, now democratically elected government officials may at times also be allies. The dualistic thinking of "them and us" that prevailed during "the struggle", which related to "state and non-state", needs to become more nuanced.

The historical role of adult education to help to mobilize marginalised and disadvantaged communities to resist and to claim a better deal for themselves is still a priority.

2. Education and Training for Democratic Participation

A new democracy takes years to consolidate and is very vulnerable. The consolidation and deepening of democracy requires behavior and institutional changes at every level of society, from the biggest to the smallest social units, within civil society including the family, the state, and the economy. From a gender perspective it needs to involve both the ongoing development of gender sensitive, facilitative legal and policy frameworks within which democratic participation can occur and the development of capacity for various constituencies and individuals to participate effectively, particularly for women.

A Micro Organizational Focus

A key question for adult education is how organizations within civil society are to build their capacities to engage effectively in multipartite structures. In a previous study[5] of education for democratic participation, I found that the both the means and the ends of the organizations were very important. The participatory democratic practices were central to ongoing human development which is so critical to their functioning. Also the organizations' connections to other similar organizations as part of a social movement was essential to ensure that democratic practices did not become ends in themselves but were focused on bringing about change in the broader society. From a feminist perspective this means being connected to the women's movements.

In the last five years the emphasis on participatory democracy within civil society organizations has weakened with, for example, the pressure for NGOs to “`professionalize”, become more efficient, and deliver services on a bigger scale. They are having to compete with one another in the marketplace which makes competitive individualism more dominant than notions of collectivism. There has also been a lessening of accountability to a social movement. Many activists from the democratic movement have been absorbed into government. Although there have been the emergence of several more specialized, focused groupings and social movements to which many organizations within civil society are aligned. For example, a large coalition of women's organizations from across the political spectrum formed themselves into the National Womens' Coalition which was concerned with impacting the national constitution making process and the development of a Women's Charter. The future of the WNC is not certain at this point.It seems that within all organizations in the society participatory democracy is an important element which needs to be encouraged in order to build self-confidence, leadership capacity and train democrats. It is clearly not a straight forward matter and would need to be shaped by its particular social and organizational contexts. But in South Africa which is in desperate need to build human capacity it needs to be accepted as a general principle.

Long term organizational development work would be required to educate and train participants in organizations in order to achieve effective participation at all levels. Part of these processes would include training related to challenging racism, sexism and other forms of chauvinism. Another aspect would involve rethinking organizational policies and practices which may reinforce particular classed, raced or gendered power relations.[6]

A Macro Focus

In the transition period, education for democratic participation has involved various state structures. On the one hand, the state has been developing the democratic constitution, laws and institutional structures in order to provide a democratic framework. Institutions like the Human Rights Commission and the Gender Commission[7] have been established and are in different stages of development. Specific education processes have also been undertaken.

There have been some impressive adult educational programmes that have been run in the last two years through the state and civil society organizations. For example,voter education to educate and mobilize the vast majority of the adult population to vote in the first democratic elections in 1994 was a major undertaking. The next major educational task was to involve the population in the national constitution-making process. The Constitutional Assembly conducted workshops, public meetings, utilized media to involve millions of individuals and thousands of organizational structures in the development of submissions for consideration in the constitution. Four million copies of the draft constitution were distributed and the Constitutional Assembly engaged in multi-media campaigns to elicit participation of the public. Another Public Education Programme has been initiated by parliament which is concerned with building democracy. There are organizations within civil society which have similar aims but also have a watchdog function.

These state and civil society educational initiatives are extremely important. But if we remember the daily life experience of Mrs Khosa we need to ask how far any of the discussions or initiatives described thus far are going to impact on her reality? A major consideration is the distribution of financial resources in a way which benefits her.

An initiative which potentially is significant relates to the formation of "a women's budget". The idea behind this is to enquire whether each state programme or department at local, provincial or national level is impacting on women for the better. As Pregs Govender[8] states :

> *What we want to know is : who gets the jobs? what is the nature of the jobs that are being created? who gets the housing? what types of homes and communities are being developed? who gets the land? etc. Due to their different locations in the family and in the economy we want to know in what way tariffs, industrial relations, employment and industrial policy impact on women.*

This initiative aims to demystify the economy for women, to set up indicators for judging the national budget, and for evaluating the performance of the different departments and programmes from the perspective of poor women. The initiative is aiming to influence the way the national budget is drawn up, how government functions, and to draw in civil society organizations in the research, education and lobbying processes. It identifies both the political and the economic spheres as crucial in order to make a difference to the life of a person like Mrs Khosa.

Another broad environmental concern that impacts on the possibilities for democratic participation particularly, but not only, of women, is that of the levels of violence at home, in the community, and at the workplace. A certain amount of education and training may assist women to deal with violence but social and political conditions will be critical in the ability of people to move about freely without fear of physical abuse.

Closely related to education for democratic participation is education for development. In order to consolidate and deepen democracy the appalling levels of inequality and injustice have to be reduced.

3. Education for Development

Adult education has traditionally been concerned more with social, political, personal and cultural development than economic development. This has begun to be recognized as a major limitation as for many adults the primary concern is economic survival. We have seen that Mrs Khosa, like 50% of the poor in South Africa, is unemployed. In a recent survey amongst a cross section of South Africans the need for jobs was rated the top priority where the government could help most, and for the rural poor, piped water is almost as high a priority.[9] Economic development includes all aspects of the economy including the national budget, the formal and informal sectors.

A key initiative in the movement towards a new adult education and training system came from the formal economic sector and more particularly from the trade union movement. The unions realized that even radical improvement of the existing industrial training system would still hold their members in a second class position. Their members needed to improve their own skills and knowledge to get better jobs. They needed to improve educational and development opportunities in their communities to obtain a better life for their families and neighbors. They also needed to contribute to a more productive and world competitive economy to pay for these policies. In the early 1990s the trade union movement joined employers and the state on the National Training Board and after three years of discussion, debate and negotiation they made policy proposals in 1994. These had "integration" as the cornerstone of national policy development, insisting on equivalence of adult basic education, vocational training and schooling.

One of the proposals was for a national qualifications grid, the National

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Qualifications Framework (NQF), which would secure integration, equivalency and access across a new national education and training system. A broad "competency model" was adopted to define and assess learning outcomes at all levels of the NQF.

Changing entrenched divisions between education, training and development systems is no easy matter. We are not only dealing with decades of apartheid but also with centuries of the division of the hand and brain which is deeply imbedded in Western philosophical traditions. These issues are obviously not South Africa's alone and other countries with widely different political histories nevertheless face similar issues in education, training and development.

In South Africa the human capital theory seems to be dominant in the policy debates. There is concern amongst some adult educators in South Africa that the integration debate is being driven by interests in the formal economic sectors, by both organized labor and employers. But it is in the informal sector that most people work. If policies are developed with only the formal sector in mind, people like Mrs Khosa will in all likelihood not benefit. This concern is not to deny the critical importance of adult education and training for highly skilled, high level people.

The question of integration is an important one which has opened up spaces to engage different traditions and to potentially challenge the human capital notion. In the structures of the NQF, in the designing of outcomes-based curricula, in the teaching methodologies, in all aspects of the teaching and learning processes, there need to be struggles to ensure that the human capital and technicist views do not become predominant. Many of the concepts can be interpreted in conservative or progressive ways. At present the power of the concept of integration lies in the fact that opportunities are being created for practitioners "to live in the gaps" between sectors and traditions of education and training. It is, for example, forcing community adult educators to take the needs of economic development seriously, and workplace trainers to remember the needs of democratic civil society.

With structural adjustment programmes which are encouraging changing employment patterns, growing insecurity of employment, the reality of jobless growth, more and more people are having to make ends meet in the informal sector. This is true both in South Africa and elsewhere. This is happening at a time when state social welfare services around the world are being eroded. This means that education and training policies and practices need to take the realities of people, particularly women, in the informal sector very seriously. The relationships between the formal and informal sectors are also important as people move from the one to the other and increasingly the formal sector is outsourcing work to informal sector businesses. So the divide between the two seems to be lessening. The divide between civil society and the economy is also diminishing.

An example of this is the increasing recognition of the importance of traditional economic institutions in poor communities, such as credit clubs, burial societies, and producer and consumer cooperative. These are important for survival purposes, for solidarity and for their potential for deepening the practice of democracy. Many of them have not developed beyond survival mode and with support and sensitive intervention potentially could provide more substantial economic support and a place for education and training in democratic participation, skills, social issues, for the grassroots membership. Many of these associations are run by women and could potentially be important sites for women's empowerment.

So far this section has concentrated on economic development, but I have tried to show that this includes a wide range of practices within the formal and informal sectors and indigenous voluntary associations. If we think of the lived reality of Mrs Khosa again it is very clear that it is not possible to keep economic activities separate from other social, political or cultural aspects, or to keep the economic, state or civil society sectors apart.

It is important to have a comprehensive approach to development. It must include economic concerns, but also those of health care, water and sanitation, family planning, environmental issues, and personal development. This latter area includes spiritual, cultural and religious matters. Religion plays a fundamental role in the lives of the majority of South Africans, including Mrs Khosa, in providing a meaning for life. This aspect of society is very important both for development and democracy.

People's centered development is underpinned by a radical humanism which incorporates the struggle for equality and economic development. Galtung[10] argues that in societies in which people's personal domains in which they can feel needed and loved are torn apart there is a need for rehumanising the vast impersonal institutions of modern society. In South Africa the need to strengthen and support the development of what Galtung calls a "culture of compassion" is very important. Mrs Khosa and her family, and others like her, desperately need to experience that. Closely linked to this is the growth of a culture of tolerance. Initiatives like the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which is currently sitting in South Africa, are very important in this regard.

CONCLUSION

The central question for this paper has been what adult education and training should focus on in order to enhance the possibilities for a more people-centered social and economic programme to succeed in South Africa at a time when global economies dictate neo-liberal policies as the only acceptable solutions. Put another way, what would need to change for Mrs Khosa and her family's life circumstances to change?

The processes of globalization are encouraging social fragmentation. The opposite of globalization is localization. This paper has argued that adult education and training is integral to economic, social, political, and cultural development which needs to rebuild social cohesion at the local levels, taking very seriously as its starting points the daily lived realities of people like Mrs Khosa.

Simultaneously, because the local is shaped so powerfully by the global, solidarity and a culture of compassion need to deepen at both local and global levels. The need for building solidarity in a climate of competition is a crucial part of alternative strategies to increase levels of the rights and living standards of the majority. Globalization from below, which means the building of solidarity and collective action amongst civil society organizations and movements, needs to take place across a wide spectrum of social causes. Adult education and training are integral to these social processes.

Endnotes

1. A version of this paper was first developed for the Association for World Education seminar held in Denmark in August, 1996. It presents a more detailed description of the competing realities in South Africa

2. DAWN Markers on the Way: The DAWN Debate on Alternative Development. DAWN´s platform for the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, September, 1995.

3. Ministry in the Office of the President: RDP "Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa", SALDRU, October, 1995.

4. Op. cit., Key Indicators of Poverty".

5. Shirley Walters, 1989, Education for Democratic Participation, CACE Publications, Belleville, South Africa.

6. One example which was brought to my attention by my colleague, Joe Samuels, is the question of what is rewarded in an organization. Does one reward behavior which resolves conflicts or prevents conflicts? Many women spend time and energy maintaining relationships and this is seldom affirmed. By rather acknowledging conflict resolution skills one is usually affirming the skills of outside consultants.

7. There is a very useful summary of the gender-related structures that are in the process of formation in articles by Catherine Albertyn "Gender Equality in the Provinces: The Question of Structures", and Amanda Gouws "The Rise of the Femocrat", both in *Agenda* No. 30, 1996, Durban, South Africa.

8. A speech by Pregs Govender, an ANC Member of Parliament, reported in "Women´s Health News", May 1996, No.18, Johannesburg.

9. RDP "Key Indicators of Poverty in South Africa", October 1995, p.4.

10. Johann Galtung, "On Social Costs of Modernization: Social Disintegration, Atomie/anomie and Social Development" in *Developpement and Change*, Vol.27, No.2, April 1996, Blackwell Publishers, England.

EMPOWERING GRASSROOTS WOMEN FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Grace Noval

Over the past 14 years, the Center for Women's Resources (CWR) grew with the grassroots women's movement in the Philippines. When she was established in 1982, her mission and role was defined as a resource and support center serving the needs of the grassroots women's movement. She was instrumental to the establishment of SAMAKANA, a broad alliance of women in Metro Manila in 1982, and in 1984, of GABRIELA, the national alliance of women's organizations. CWR participated in and contributed to the process of building grassroots women's organizations through the regional centers and national women's organizations.

CWR responded to the challenges for broadening by mainstreaming gender in the development community. This meant expanding the focus and refining her internal systems to sufficiently meet the growing needs and challenges not only of the grassroots women's movement but also of the broader development community.

Through the years, different courses for education and training were developed:

1. Basic Women's Orientation (BWO)
2. Gender Development Workshop (GDW)
3. Leadership Training
4. Trainer's Training

Many of these modules underwent a process of review and revisions. The national grassroots women's organizations and GABRIELA provided CWR with feedback on the content of the courses.

Short courses were likewise developed:

1. Violence Against Women
2. Women's Situationer
3. Women's Health and Reproductive Rights

CWR also conducted education on issues like the impact of MTPDP (Medium Term Philippine Development Program) on Women, Women and Globalization, and other national sectoral and women-specific issues.

Expect for the GDW, most of the training and education courses were conducted for the regional centers and members of the national grassroots women's organizations. They were provided with copies of the modules to ensure that they will be able to conduct these courses on their own. These courses were very useful for the national grassroots women's organizations and the regional women centers. These were used as reference materials. The regional centers were able to particularize the Basic Women Orientation module according to their specific situation. They also modified the course to make it more relevant to the particular sector they work with.

The national grassroots women's organizations and GABRIELA also used the BWO module as reference material for the development of their basic courses. The discussion of the herstory of the women's movement and the position of women in Philippine society were deemed as the most useful. They added specific data from their own studies and placed emphasis on the situation of women from their sector.

Aside from the BWO, the centers and national grassroots women's organizations appreciated the skills training on leadership, group facilitation, module making, writing, organizing and social investigation. These courses enabled them to develop their own modules and to provide similar courses to their affiliates and chapters. These training courses on skills relevant to organizing education work enhanced the capabilities of the regional centers and national grassroots women's organizations in implementing their main strategies of organizing and education.

CWR was able to contribute to the campaigns and advocacy of the regional women centers and the national grassroots women's organizations through her publications. The Piglas Diwa issues were utilized as reference materials in the education, campaign and advocacy activities of the latter. The publications were very useful in providing the empirical data to strengthen their advocacy and education work. GABRIELA also refers to the data provided by the Usaping Lila in the preparation of her statements and primers.

The researches which CWR conducted for the centers and the national grassroots women's organizations contributed to their organizing and campaign work. The researches on the impact of MTPDP on Women, Women and Disaster, Women's Situation in Southern Tagalog, Maternity Leave, and Flexibilization of Labor were cited as very helpful. An earlier campaign conducted by the women worker's movement or Kilusang mga Manggagawang Kababaihan (KMK) for an extension of the maternity leave benefits of women workers were strengthened by CWR's researches. The Women and Disaster and Southern Tagalog Women's Situation were used not only for campaigns but also as basis for the organizing work of women's organizations in Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog respectively.

Another research project, On Labor Flexibilization was jointly done in partnership with KMK. CWR helped in the publication of Ugnay Kababaihan, the women workers' newsletter, and developing the training module on the topic based on the research results. CWR was also tapped in making the education campaign materials for particular unions like the wall newspaper for the Shoemart Union.

There is also an ongoing research on the Women Weavers in selected urban poor areas in Baguio City. CWR also had joint undertakings with SAMAKANA, the national organization of women in the urban poor communities. This included community education campaigns wherein the center was tapped for module conceptualization and the mobile library for the actual implementation, the 5-day a month integration of staff in the urban poor communities, and the Urban Poor and Housing study.

It was clear that as CWR developed her capabilities, the demands for her services to the national grassroots women´s organizations and regional centers grew.

CWR's Gender Sensitivity and Gender Development Workshops had developed the awareness of the NGOs and people's organizations. These workshops further strengthened their programs and services. These also increased the chances of actually making the policies and programs of mixed organizations more gender sensitive in varying degrees. PAMALAKAYA, a fisherfolk organization, decided to make "Women and the Fishery Program" as one of their priorities. There was increased gender awareness within Philippine Rural Reconstruction Movement (PRRM) and it has set up a Gender and Development Committee which had developed its own module for staff holding managerial positions. One institution, the Mindanao Land Foundation, developed a pilot income generating project for women. It reviewed its Community Based Data System to make it more gender sensitive and adjusted its personnel policies.

On Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

The main mechanism for planning, monitoring and evaluating CWR's services is the Inter-Center Consultation (ICC). It is a loose network of regional women centers and CWR functioned as a coordinating body for setting schedules, gathering feedbacks and determining the needs of the regional centers. It meets four times a year.

For the national grassroots women's organizations and GABRIELA, formal venues and consultations were also done two times a year. Through these consultations, integration of program efforts were made. These could be reflected in the clarity of direction and complementation of the plan for module development, with the research agenda, issue planning for the publication, the direction of data collection, and the accummulation of library materials.

A product of this is a yearly one month leadership training course for women called the "Paaralang Liza Balando" (PLB) aimed at honing grassroots womens' leaders capacities

Named after woman worker who was killed in a Labor Day rally in 1971 at the height of the Marcos dictatorship, this course is held during the school break, when the women have relatively more time to be absent from their households.

Other means of project monitoring and evaluation were utilized such as regional visits during the trainings, project orientation and monitoring, research and staff immersions.

CWR has stood firm on her option and bias for grassroots women and she has been continuously developing and enhancing her strategies and systematizing her operations.

CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN LEARNING FROM THE STANDPOINT OF THE LATIN AMERICAN SEMINAR ON NON FORMAL EDUCATION WITH WOMEN

Miryan Zúñiga E.

BACKGROUND OF THE SEMINAR[1]

Between 1993 and 1995 the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) and the German Foundation for International Development (DSE) developed a research project on innovation in non formal and adult education (INNAE) from different parts of the world with the following objectives:

(1) to initiate a participatory learning process on research about non formal and adult education;

(2) to analyze, document and encourage innovative projects in non formal and adult education; and

(3) to draw lessons for the design, implementation and evaluation of innovations.

Originally INNAE included a last stage of dissemination of the results through regional seminars in Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, during the last seminar, it became clear that the aim of INNAE should not be to set a "model" of successful innovations to disseminate around the world, but to provide the conditions and the space for a joint building of knowledge on innovative strategies on non formal and adult education.

The great concern, during the seminars, with gender sensitivity and empowerment as important factors for all adult learning projects, was the main reason to organize the Latin American Seminar on Educational Experiences with Women.

THE OBJECTIVES AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE LATIN AMERICAN SEMINAR

It was in this context that the Latin American Seminar was organized with the following objectives: (1) to share innovative educational experiences with women, in order to identify common issues and questions; (2) to confront the common issues of the participant projects, with those of the INNAE'S; and (3) to facilitate the development of the participant projects, through encouraging their capacity for self analysis.

There were three groups of participants in the Latin American Seminar. The first group was made up of the case study authors, women members of the selected projects. The second group were the consultants from the field of Education and of gender while the third were coordinators from the DSE, the UNESCO and participants of the INNAE process from Chile and Colombia.

The case study authors wrote their papers between March and August 1995, following a research guide made by the coordinators. These papers were distributed among all the participants in the seminar, one month before the beginning of the event in Melgar, in order to be studied previously. There were 20 case study authors from Argentina, Chile, Bolivia, Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua, Peru and Honduras. The following chart gives some information about the projects:

COUNTRY	PROJECT	OBJECTIVES
1. Argentina	Cooperative Women	To develop a non formal educational program at the University of San Juan, to train peasant women to strengthen their social organization and their agricultural production
2. Bolivia	Center of Promotion and training of Women (CEPROMU)	To strengthen the participation of peasant women in the local power structure.
3. Bolivia	Center of Promotion and Development of Self Reliance(CEDEFOA)	To help women to improve their quality of life, through processes of self help and gender equity.
4. Bolivia	Center of Integral Training for Peasant Women (CIMCA)	To help women to become a self reliant group, working on animal production and community development.
5. Bolivia	The intelligence (LA JARNIGOINE)	To teach spanish speaking immigrant women, the three R´s in their own language, in order to help them to become participant citizens in Canada.
6. Colombia	Training of Family Leaders (CIMDER)	To train women for self health care and family and community development.
7. Colombia	Foundation for Community Development (FUNDAC)	To build a collective force of women for social and political action.
8. Colombia	Stand Up Women	To train trainers for women´s organizations engaged in empowerment process.
9. Chile	Women´s House (Sur Profesionales)	To train women for leadership in community development.
10. Chile	Aymara Women (Corporación Desarrollo Norte Grande)	To promote the social participation of Aymara women in the design and evaluation of development policies for indigenous people.
11. Ecuador	Research Center about the Ecuatorian Women (CEIME)	To help women´s organizations build a more human and fair society.
12. El Salvador	Women for Dignity and Life	To train women for their empowerment and autonomy.
13. Honduras	School of Legal Promoters	To train women as legal promoters in women´s rights and family law.
14. Mexico	Popular Education with Women (GEM)	To study the meaning of maternity and work, in order to promote proposals of policies which help women gain autonomy.
15. Mexico	Group of Information about self-elected maternity (GIRE)	To help women make decisions about their own health and reproduction, in order to improve their quality of life.
16. Mexico	Research Center For Rural Development (CESDER)	To help women´s organizations achieve community development through self reliance.
17. Nicaragua	Center For Workers (CECO)	To train women to become workers.
18. Peru	School of Women´s Leaders (FORIDA)	To help women develop leadership qualities, in order to participate in a democratic style of development.
19. Peru	Center for Population Development (CEPRODEP)	To qualify women to work in rural development and women´s rights.
20. Peru	Gender and Development	To train women in leadership, to strengthen their social organization and participate in local development.

MAIN ISSUES RAISED DURING THE SEMINAR

The Seminar worked on three main themes: Gender, Education and INNOVATIONS. And then three discussion groups were constituted according to the orientation of the projects: Rural Community, Education and Work and Power and Leadership.

A. **GENDER**: Gender is a concept which comprises the following elements:

1. It is a historical, social and symbolical construction.
2. It recognizes that the roles traditionally assigned to women, do not come from their nature, but from culture.
3. It accounts for the unequal social relations between men and women, which regulates the subordination of women and their exclusion of the exercise of power in society.
4. It should promote the construction of a concept about equality, in the context of each culture and recognize the differences within equality
5. The concept of gender, in the context of the Women´s movement, should be related with the concepts of autonomy and empowerment
6. In order to deepen the concept of gender, some tensions should be solved, such as:

- political proposals for change in the social relations between men and women;
- the search for data about inequalities between men and women, in the context of everyday life;
- to find out how males and females face the same problems;
- to design how women should assume those social roles, traditionally assigned to men;
- to recognize that working with women does not always mean working from the gender perspective;
- to harmonize the social and the personal changes women need to make, to become empowered;
- to confront those development programs which, under the idea of women´s liberation, reinforce their traditional roles. Some of those programmes appeal to their maternity role, to involve women in neighborhood activities;
- the need to involve men in the discussion of gender issues;
- the need to work against gender discrimination, facing the difference;
- the need to work from the gender perspective, in multi-ethnic societies;
- the search for a strategy for overcoming essentialist cultural barriers;
- the tendency to criticize the term feminism and to use the term gender, in a more neutral sense;
- the discussion about the need of women to have their own spaces, to talk about their social conditions and their need to have spaces to interact with men; and
- the tendency to foster a wrong view of social reality, when using concepts such as the triple role of women and the practical and the strategic needs.

B. **EDUCATION**: The projects have the following in common:

1. The recognition of women as important subjects in the educational process, which means that such a process, should be fitted to their social and ethnic conditions.

2. A curriculum component about gender, through which women issues are discussed and a methodology which starts sensitizing women about their historical and social conditions and continues raising questions and issues to foresee the desirable future.

3. Some discussion themes, like women´s subordination, women´s load of work at home and at work, violence against women, social relations at home, community participation of women, social status of women´s jobs, women´s rights, etc.

4. The emphasis in recovering women´s subjectivity and ludicrousness through teaching strategies as well as a pedagogy which recognizes the body, the mind and the feelings of women.

5. The use of some pedagogical principles such as: learning through experience, learning in groups, and contextual content and the pedagogical purpose of educating to empower women and to achieve gender equality.

6. The fact that most of the trainers of these projects are not professional teachers, but lawyers, nurses, social workers, economists, etc. who have a very deep commitment to the women´s social movement.

7. The emphasis on the educational process related with the achievement of personal and social changes, without discarding the end results.

8. The recognition of the different dimensions of education: cognitive, reflexive, constructive, and decisive.

9. The production of teaching materials especially designed for women.

10. The existence of some tensions about educating women, such as:
    - the search for women´s autonomy in face of the observed dependency of them from the trainers and the NGO´s responsible of the projects;
    - the extent to which the personal and the social issues should be worked during the training;
    - the political need of making women visible;
    - the needs and timing of women trainees vs. the purposes and timing of financial agencies;
    - the decision of working with women´s organization or with individual women;
    - the possible danger of training women for social participation, from the perspective of the masculine rationale;
    - the need to define development from a female perspective;
    - the need to understand how women learn;
    - the need to systematize experiences of education with women; and
    - the need to tie theory about gender and educational theory.

C. **INNOVATIONS**: After a long discussion about the meaning of innovation, the participants agreed on the following:

1. There is no universal form of innovation which could apply to all societies. Thus, innovations should be assessed in specific contexts, as particular responses to local problems.

2. Innovations are also dependent on the social actors involved in the educational project. In this case, the

social actors are women and the axis of the projects is made up by the content and the methodology specifically designed for women. That is, the meaning of innovation, comes up from the intersection between the concept of gender and the concept of education.

3. Innovation means: flexibility, contextualization, concern for the participants and their differences, risk taken, advancement in the democratic process of society, and generation of personal and social changes.

4. Educational innovations work with the forgotten actors (women), creating alternative pedagogical environments, to promote changes in the mind, feelings and behavior of the participants, through meaningful relationships between participants and between them and trainers.

5. Innovations in education are concerned with meaningful learning of women and therefore, with their ability to conform and consolidate women´s organizations for change.

D. RURAL COMMUNITY

1. Educational projects in rural contexts are tied up to three topics of discussion: (a) native cultures in processes of interacting with urban and "modern"cultures; (b) accelerated processes of impoverishment; and (c) strong patriarchal traditions.

2. Educational projects with peasant women, should regain the traditional knowledge and technology about medicine, agricultural and animal production, pottery, the weather, etc. which is usually in the minds of women.

3. The training of rural women should focus more on increasing their self esteem, because they are marginalized for both: being based in the rural areas and being women.

E. EDUCATION AND WORK

1. Educational projects that train women for work, have the risk of generating discontent, because gaining work abilities does not guarantee finding a job.

2. Education for work with women who need employment, should take into account that their first interest is to gain practical learnings. Thus, the discussion about gender issues should come parallel with the learnings of work abilities.

3. Education for work with women should be connected with strategies for placing them in jobs and with follow up processes, which could help women gain autonomy and self esteem in their work place.

F. POWER AND LEADERSHIP

1. Gender relations are power relations in such a way that power is always masculine. The question is not how to reverse such a situation, but how to establish democratic relations between women and men.

2. Since historically women have been behind the power, they have not had the opportunity to exercise leadership.

The problem is how to become leaders and be feminine.

3. As women tend to be group oriented, and leadership tend to be exercised by individuals, how to build up group leadership which could be socially accepted?

4. One concern is to help women to become full citizens. This means to accept responsibilities and to exercise their rights. But women easily take responsibilities which do not carry public leadership (they work very hard; but they are not visible); besides, they do not fight strongly for their rights: how to change this situation?

CHALLENGES

From the standpoint of educational projects, the social movement of women has to face four main challenges:

1. to characterize the relationships between the elements that interact in the pedagogical process (context, women teachers, women students, knowledge to be transmitted, methods, materials and projects of future) in order to facilitate those relations, which make possible the changes women need. That is, to build up a pedagogy for women;

2. to systematize those educational experiences which are most successful from the standpoint of women, in order to learn from them;

3. to design specific programs to train teachers or promoters for educational projects with women; and

4. to explore new types and styles of leadership for women, in the context of the educational process.

Endnote

1. This paper attempts to report on the Latin American Seminar on Non-Formal Educational Experiences with Women held in Melgar, Colombia last October 1996, in order to point out some challenges the women´s movement should meet.

WOMEN´S MOVEMENT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: *"EXERCISING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP"*

Celia Eccher

Some learnings...

I feel this a great opportunity to share with women from all over the world, two important issues: the intense and demanding experience of learning and the double exercise of the citizenship. These issues have been part of our work, as activists of the Latin American and Caribbean Women´s Movement at global and local level during the preparatory process towards Beijing, at Beijing itself, and now we are working on the Follow up of Beijing´s Conference.

The process to Beijing has been very complex but rich, we have moved forward and backwards, we have agreed and sometimes not. Within the variety of perspectives I would like to focus firmly on the double exercise of the citizenship and the educational dimension of it which is still not very widespread, analyzed, systematized and assessed. It is worth bringing to mind that the women from the Latino-caribeña region have not raised their voices to talk about citizenship by chance. We have changed the leitmotiv for the Conference: equality, development and peace.The term Equality was substituted by Citizenship. According to the Platform for Action, equality is attained by means of exercising civil rights. In order to exercise our rights as citizens we have to feel ourselves the significance of them, we have to recognize them, we have to be subjects of rights and subjects with rights.

Many advances have been made after the Beijing Conference and nowadays we are facing an important agenda for the future. The greatest challenge is to develop citizenship policies for women. The creation of new strategies will allow us to approach the universal recognition of women´s citizenship. And as women come face to face with globalization, there is a shift of focus on the exercise of a "global citizenship".

The empowerment of democracies and the broadness of women´s citizenship have to go together. Our Chilean sisters said:" Democracy in the country and at home". We have been actively involved in the vindication of this claim. During the confrontations with dictatorships women gained a space and played a very important role. But when democracy was settled back women´s space became smaller and their actions became weaken. This happened because the patriarchal political parties as well as civil society organizations and unions came back but wanted to regain their own male privileges.

Women nonetheless have continued to work and adapt to the situation. Vargas (1995) for example explains, "In this last decade the women´s movement has changed its way of behaving. Women have developed new ways of communicating with civil society and specially with the Governments. We have substituted our policies of confrontation by policies of negotiation. This means that the Movement has determined that a very significant part of its empowerment is due to the exercise of women´s citizenship and to the presentation of proposals that had developed women´s ability to make decisions at the national level but also regional and international."

This is important considering that in the nineties, there is a major participation of NGOs at the World Conferences. For instance at the Rio Environmental Conference in 1992 that was the first and largest Conference, and the Global Forum of NGOs which was attended by a large number of NGOs, there was already the visible participation of women.

Given this, "the Conferences of the Nineties" assume an integrated perspective in which the different problems and topics are related. This change has been influenced directly by the NGOs and social movements and specially , by the women´s movement because women´s experiences showed that daily common problems of development could not been take, isolatedly." (Correa, 1995)

Yet there is still a need for the women´s movements to assess their gains in such conferences. For instance, the evaluation of the articulation of the NGOs work to Beijing had its positive elements, especially its political impact. However the educational dimension of the process has not been evaluated yet.

Regarding the political impact, we could say that strategies were created from a feminist perspective. The women were also able to raise the issues of the double and triple women´s burden, citizenship discrimination, discrimination against indigenous, black women, lesbians, old women etc. Thirdly it encouraged women to participate from their diversity. The strategies enabled women to evaluate politically and strategically some key moments and it developed alliances. Finally strategies were articulated country by country and region by region.

The strategy of education was not visible, but it was the solid floor that enabled the development of the political strategy. It was developed by means of several and innovative practices that can and should be collected and systematized. Educational strategies were developed at different levels: in the collective articulations in each country, in the creation of national and regional papers, in workshops, in meetings and conferences, in the workshops on Lobby and also in the communications by e-mail, list servers, electronic conferences, etc.

POST BEIJING

"The XXI century started in Beijing and since then we can say that there are two sexes in the world". Thus said Ms Rosiska D´arcy, the President of the Women Council of Brazil. If we do not want this statement to be the single product of Beijing Conference, we must work patiently, hard and constantly on the Follow up of the World Action Platform (WAP).

It is true that many of our proposals are now in the public agenda and we also know that many of the Governments are fulfilling their commitments. However we still have to work on the planning and action of those commitments. We know that women are working differently in the different countries. Given this we have created two strategies expressed in one instrument that will contribute to our work whatever the region and whatever the organization: **The Fulfilled Commitment Index and a Symbolic day: September 8, Female Citizenship Day.**

REPEM´s articulation is still the same, but with a different organization. REPEM is committed to the follow up of the WAP in the areas of Education and Feminization of Poverty. And now we are actively involved in the preparatory process to Hamburg where the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education will be held in July 1997.

We believe that women´s challenge in Hamburg will be to uncover the invisible dimension of education that will enable women to exercise citizen rights. The Conference will be a strategic event for the advancement on women´s rights. We believe that Youth and Adult Education should be equally addressed and related to the exercise of a citizenship that will promote equality and justice on gender relationships and will foster the empowerment of democracies.

The Youth and Adult education main objective is ... "to make women feel their citizen rights, make them feel that they are subject of rights and with rights, so that they can assume their demands and assume their proposals. Recognizing their abilities and legitimizing their rights to raise their voices" (Valdez, 1996). This means that Youth and Adult Education promoted by NGOs and by the women´s movement allows women to be trained and to get the information to exercise their rights. While Youth and Adult Education is carried out all over the regions, it is still not widespread, compared or analyzed. The challenge for the future of Youth and Adult Education is to create processes of learning for the exercise of citizenship at different levels. Not only local but global, so that we can put forward the follow up of the Conferences and the Commitments of the Governments.

At the Forum on Gender and Youth and Adult Education in Rio de Janeiro 1996, we reflected on our educational experiences and our lessons during the pre and post Beijing and we also analyzed our preparation to HAMBURG. We prepared workshops on Lobby and Advocacy, on Health Educative practices and on Training of Trainers

In this connection, I would like to share two testimonies of two women, both Brazilian, both activists in the process of the articulation of women in Beijing. These two women showed us different experiences but both talked about diversity and about that fluctuation of women´s movement from the local to the global.

The first testimony was taken from what Schuma Shumaher´s evaluation of the Brazilian women´s working process to Beijing at the Assembly in Rio de Janeiro last October.She said that the Secretariat received 22 diagnosis from the different States, but there was one that came from the Amazona with an attached message from a peasant. The message said: I trust women who are going to Beijing. I would like to request something. I would very much appreciate if you claim that I should have a pair of shoes I enjoy the union meetings a lot, but I don´t have a pair of shoes to go to.

With just three sentences this woman could show us that in order to exercise our citizenship we have to exercise our right to work, but putting immediately on the table three elements: the exercise of citizen rights education and work. Without the combination of these elements the broadening of Citizenship would be different.

The second testimony comes from Sonia Correa, one of our Public Policies expert feminist. She said:

"The first thing we learn is related to ***global citizenship****, it was to transform our critical theories of the world. Women´s eyes on the world used to be very radical and the language was very negative. Now we learned to be positive. That is to say, we say what we want, we say what is necessary to be done. This has been a fundamental change. We discuss every single word, comas, etc. This is a recent change. Secondly, we learnt about* ***negotiation****. We realized that is a tool for transformation. We discovered that Democracy is not a formal principle, it is a way to do things. Democracy transforms the negativity of the confrontation in the possible positivity of Participating IN Conferences at national levels or a the level of UN. Furthermore we learnt that* ***statements****, are not merely ideological. We learnt to create our own statements, we learnt to include the theoretical, technical, and statistical basis of our statements. The products of the Cairo Conference changed absolutely the old paradigm of Population and Development within the Neo-Malthusian framework of the fifties. This would not have happened without women´s movements. It was not enough to claim that population policies were bad, that was necessary but not sufficient. We had to create solid statements*

statistically based. We had to work with different actors. For instance, the Academy that gave us the tools, information etc. We also experienced the importance of ***information and communication****. It is a must to disseminate information from the grass roots to the local level and then to global level. That was our urgent task. I am sure that if this communication network has not been created in the way to Beijing and at Beijing specially, we would have failed. The need to leave our circles of information and communication is an important matter. We have to influence the mass media, we have to face the limits of alternative communication and confront it. Regarding the* ***international process*** *we also learned many things. We had to recognize the differences among us, different agendas, different abilities, and since then we recognize the need to reach agreements in order to influence the public agenda. We know that we did not reach a total consensus but strategical ones so that we started working on the division of tasks and the need to* ***define priorities for the management of big policies strategically.***

Finally we have to analyze all these facts, convey them and develop much better in a learning process. We have to translate it to other people, we have to create spaces for training. This is fundamental to face the future. I know that we can create an agenda with five very efficient women, but we are not going to go through the necessary process of creation that is needed with the large amount of human resources that we have nowadays. The challenge for the future is training, training and training."

From REPEM we learned and we are still learning from our work and from the planning at regional and world levels. To learn and understand the exercise of global citizenship is not an easy task. REPEM´s network comprises popular educators whose experiences is related to women from popular sectors, with low income, and who have not received enough formal education, who work in bad conditions or are unemployed, with low capital and little access to technology. These are women who usually make big efforts to overcome their problems in a continent which is going through one of the worst economic periods, and that suffers the effects of corruption, terrorism and violence. It is very clear in the field of gender, education and economy, the need for training trainers and the need of influencing the decision policy makers.

I do feel that there are many things that we learnt through years of experience. I feel that there are many successful experiences that should be analyzed, reflected and compared. It is not good to be only reactive to politics but to give proposals and raise our voices.

We started very quietly to take part in the Conferences. First in the Cairo Conference, then at the Social Summit and later Beijing. We have published, we have prepared workshops and we have two commitments: the follow up of the Social Summit through the Social Watch and World Action Platform in Beijing. In the Follow up of the World Action Platform, not only did we organize an International Forum on Gender and Youth and Adult Education, but we also published the book: Education in Motion that is an instrument for the next Conference on Adult Education in Hamburg. We worked very actively in Brasilia, the regional preparatory conference to CONFINTEA V and we produced a document with gender perspective. We are now articulating the work of NGOs of Latin America and the Caribbean and we are organizing a meeting in New York with some global networks, with the International Women Tribune Center, with ICAE and some financial agencies.

Above all and no matter the circumstances I am an optimistic activist of the women´s movement. And I feel satisfied when we succeed at our work at regional level, but we must not forget that we are also committed to work on the follow-up the World Action Platform at regional and national level.

We are going to have the strategic meeting of America Latina in Cartagena de Indias in May and we are preparing a panel on Women and Education as a preparatory activity to CONFINTEA V, in Hamburg. We are extremely concerned about Lobby training and about women´s actions at the Conference in Hamburg.

CONFINTEA V is a great opportunity to plan strategically our actions. We have to share information, we have to agree on the steps, we have to define a clear political agenda, we have to add amendments to the final Draft. Finally we have to put together our present and future problems. We still have a long way to go, but we have a big bag full of experiences that will allow us to face the new challenges more qualified.

Finally, women´s challenge in Hamburg will be to uncover the invisible dimension of education which enables women to exercise their citizen rights.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

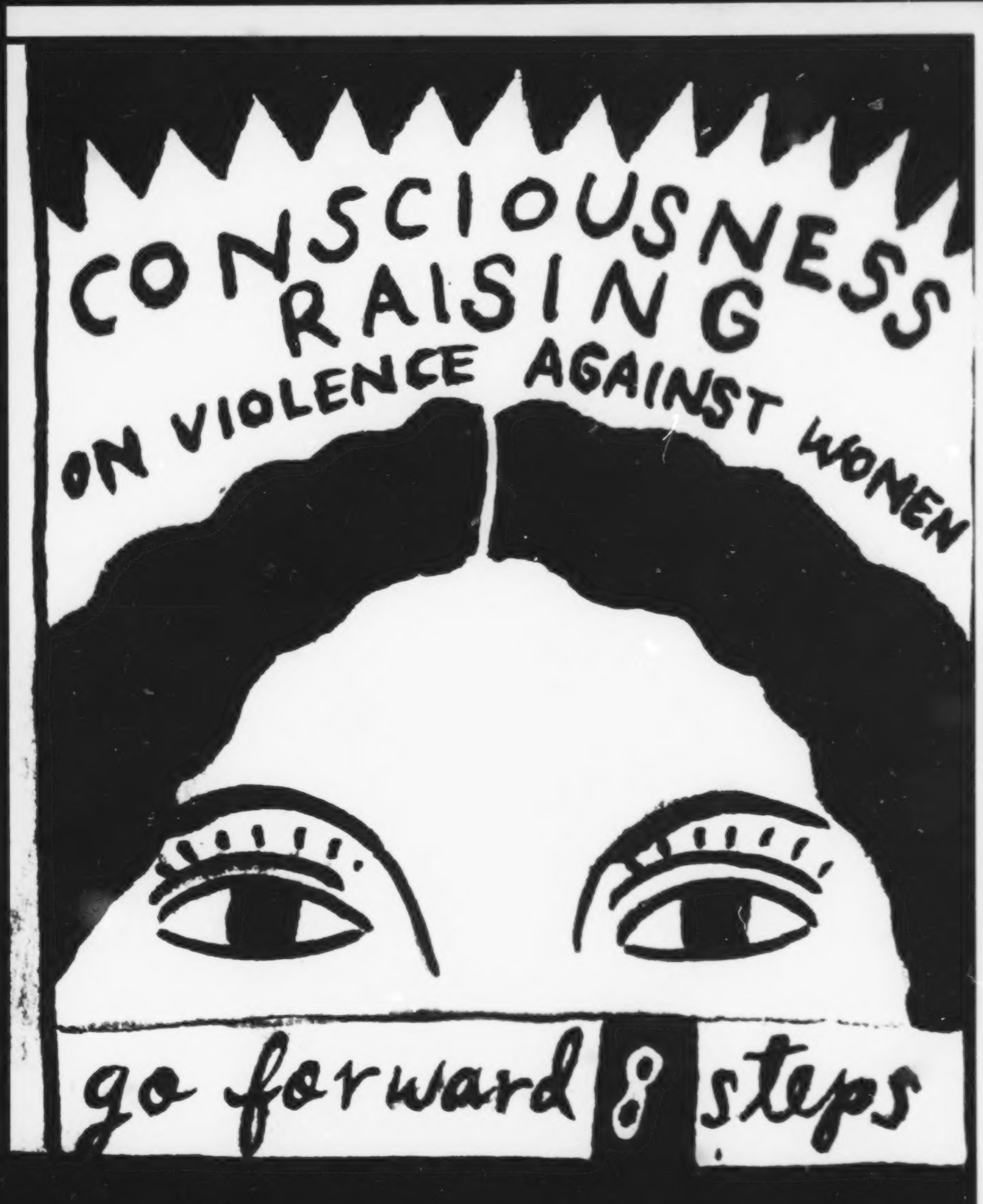
CIDEM-REPEM 1996. *Memoria Foro Género y Diudadanía*. La Paz, Bolivia.

Correia, S. - Gouveia T. 1995. *As mulheres na political global: uma resenha*. Rio de Janeiro, Brasil.

NOVIB-INSTITUTO DEL TERCER MUNDO 1997. *Social Watch*. Montevideo, Uruguay.

REPEM (1996). *Rumbo al siglo XXI: Diversas miradas*. Rio de Janeiro, Brasil. (mimeo).

Vargas, V. 1995 *Los desafíos del movimiento hacia la IV Conferencia Mundial sobre la Mujer*. Santo Domingo, República Dominicana. (mimeo).


CONSCIOUSNESS
RAISING
ON VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
go forward 8 steps

THE KEY ISSUE OF SAFETY FOR EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION

Gillian Marie

It is important to celebrate that the concerns and perspectives of women will in fact make it to the agenda of such a significant adult education conference as the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education, *Adult Learning: a Key for the 21st Century* to be held inHamburg in July 1997. It is now up to those of us attending to ensure that the policies that we discuss and propose address the obstacles that prevent all women from participating fully in their societies and to their full potential.

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

I have worked in the area of Women and Children and Violence for about 20 years. I am working at the flax roots, and have the role of organising community education programmes for women in the region in which I live. This is also the region that I was born in and went to school in, giving me a strong local connection with the women that I work beside and with. I organise, with local women, programmes that are wide ranging in their subject matter or themes. On the topic of Violence against Women I plan, organise, and teach in programmes on different aspects of violence and for very diverse participant groups, depending upon local community need. Let me give you a few examples.It may be a residential weekend for women survivors of childhood sexual abuse and their children. Or a training workshop for women involved in Refuge or Rape Crisis work. An advocacy workshop for community workers that covers the particular needs of women who have been abused.It may be a workshop for counsellors or similar professional groups that work with women who are survivors. Programmes that challenge men to confront their violence and its impact on women are also crucial in the struggle for a violent-free world.

I have also worked in Canada and Nicaragua and travelled with my job extensively. My present work and this paper have developed from these very rich experiences and from research that is based on my work with women 18 to 60 years of age who were prevented from participating fully in education earlier in their lives. I wish to acknowledge all of the women who have been abused and who have shared their stories with me and given me permission to quote their words.

INTRODUCTION

Violence against women and children is a huge problem in my country. Research indicates that one woman in five has been sexually abused before she reaches 16 years of age[1]. In 1993 sixteen women died at the hands of their male partner. Forty percent of all homicides are domestic related while 80% of violent incidents that the police attend to in New Zealand are the result of domestic disputes. We are still discovering the significance that these experiences have on women and their life chances. I continue to learn about the needs of women and how they have changed and continue to change. I remember when feminists first began to speak out about Rape, and how those brave first women did so with trepidation and fear, how some spoke out about their experiences with masks covering their identities. In those early days of disclosure, women discussed stranger rape and only later were other forms of rape identified. I recall the first time that I came to realise that the forced sex that I had experienced by my ex-husband was in fact rape, although at that time rape within marriage was not against the law or recognised as a crime in my country. It was from these early beginnings that our understanding of rape expanded and developed with the subsequent organisation for law changes, community and professional education about the issue and the effects that it has on women's lives, and the setting up of and the lobbying for funds for organisations involved in working with the women survivors of rape. At a later time, women disclosed their experiences of incest and child abuse. We not only recognised father-daughter rape, but rape by any family member who was in a position of power. I recalled the discomfort I had felt earlier in my life on hearing about the "Incest Taboo" in a first year Anthropology course at University in 1969. How could there be this 'Universal Taboo' when I myself had been abused sexually as a child?

I remembered the feeling of alienation from other class members and tried to make sense of my own experiences of being abused by my older brother, feeling very much alone and abnormal. Later, when open discussion by survivors of incest and child abuse occured within the Women's Movement, I was enabled to understand my own experiences within their social context. Using this newly constructed knowledge assisted me in my own healing process and in my later work with other abuse survivors. It also formed the basis of programmes I organise to educate the community and professionals about child abuse and the work for its prevention and eventual eradication.

I recall these events to make several points. It is through the sharing of our personal and individual journeys of understanding that subsequent collective organisation for social change occurs, and the need for culturally appropriate responses to violence against women are recognised and formulated in policy, new laws and new practice. I believe that unless people understand an issue, not only cognitively but with their hearts, and then work collectively on solutions then no long-lasting social change will occur. These examples point out the power that comes when we name our experiences, share them, and from this baseline of solidarity formulate our own processes, solutions, and the necessary policy changes that are appropriate to the social context that we live in. This longer historical viewpoint illustrates that solutions change and develop with our on-going collective analysis and that an essential component of this process is community adult education.

Making policy for **all** women is indeed a challenge. It is important to recognise that we do not have the answers for all women. We need to both recognise that we come with our own perspectives that have shaped us and our understandings, and also formulate policy that is inclusive and can be used by women from cultures, countries and economies that are very different to our own and by women who have different strategic needs at this historical moment. Thus policy within the Declaration and Agenda for the Future has to be broad enough to include the needs of all women yet specific enough to assist women in their struggles which are constrained by their own cultural contexts.

At this point I would like to share with you how we have been learning to do this in Aotearoa-New Zealand, where we have two peoples[2] with different cultural perspectives and consequently differing agendas, processes and desired outcomes. In the early stages of working in the area of violence against women and children, we worked on strategies that were considered appropriate for **all** women. Let me give you an example. When we were establishing Women's Refuges for women who had been battered, physically assaulted by their partners, we planned from the presumption that a woman would contact us, a refuge worker would bring her to the refuge house, and her individual needs would be addressed by the refuge workers. We presumed that all women were in a nuclear family situation and did not have an extended family as their reference. As Maori [the indigenous people of New Zealand-the people of the land] women used the refuge houses in greater numbers, more complex issues arose. Many Maori women live within an extended family network and this fact needed to be taken into account if the refuge movement was to meet their needs. Maori women workers in the Refuge Movement challenged Pakeha [non-Maori] women to not only share resources, but move over so that Maori women could, with their cultural knowledge, better support Maori women who sought assistance from a refuge. This particular time was a very significant one for Pakeha women. We began to educate ourselves about our own and others' cultural perspectives and how that impacts on our work. We looked at ways of making policy and working out procedures that were inclusive of other perspectives. We also needed to understand that issues of Maori Sovereignty and self-determination not only pertain to land issues but to all aspects of life and working situations. There were times when we looked to Maori women for policy direction, recognising that they held a bi-cultural perspective which was more expansive than our monocultural perspective. Now as women from other than the two dominant cultures in New Zealand are using the Refuge, this process of cultural understanding continues and changes.

These experiences helped me when I was working in Nicaragua. I was invited there to assist in the development of training materials on the topic of violence against women with AMLAE and Casa de las Mujeres, Ocho de marzo. Their starting point was the Constitution of Nicaragua, and this was the document that we used as our foundation for educating in the community that "Violencia Contra de las Mujeres" was in fact illegal. As there were no resources to establish safe houses for women to retreat to from a violent relationship, different processes for dealing with such situations had to be organised. This of course affects the kinds of training required of community workers and the more general education of both women and men in the community. As many women rely on their mothers for support [and in fact many Nicaraguan households consist of the three generations of mother--daughter--grandchildren], the education of women as to their legal rights is a crucial part of their empowerment. It was a significant learning for me and it made me appreciate the power of women dominated households. Because it was often the woman's mother who had legal title to the house, they could pack up their male partner's belongings but themselves remain in the house with their children. This experience enabled me to rethink some of the solutions to problems women faced in my own country, and I realised how powerfully patriarchal institutions had effected the chances and choices of women in my own family and culture.

My perspective was recently challenged again when I attended an international conference, *Adult Education, Women, Literacy and Development* [3] where I had the opportunity to discuss some of the findings about violence against women and its impact on women and children's educational and consequent economic opportunities. In the discussion about the locations and types of violence we touched on families of origin [birth family] and association [e.g. marriage or relationship in adulthood]; school or learning centre; culture and socialisation; and religion. A Palestinian delegate asked why I had not included government sanctioned violence of the police, army and occupying forces. She spoke of Palestinian children terrorised by the experiences of waking up to dawn raids by the occupying forces, and of being assaulted on their way to school by soldiers. I recalled the way in which former President Somoza in Nicaragua had used schooling [or its lack of provision] and the concept of legitimacy as a way of retaining power and suppressing the Nicaraguan people. The impact of arrest,imprisonment and torture on Sandinista students profoundly affected a generation of young Nicaraguans. When people are involved in the liberation struggle of their country, state imposed terrorism has consequences for the individual which need to be addressed in adult education programme content.

THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE ON GIRLS' EDUCATION

One of the factors often overlooked in discussion of barriers to girl's participation in education is violence. Yet it is one of the factors that prevent girls from fully "attending" at school, from participating in classroom activities. Many girls, because it is unsafe in the classroom and/or unsafe in their homes, are unable to concentrate on studying.This can lead to them dropping out early from school. On the other hand, many may have completed the required ten years of compulsory education, but leave school with no qualifications, barely able to read and write. They often leave school with low self esteem regarding their capabilities, feeling unintelligent and dumb. Some of these women are not functionally literate, a very real handicap in a post-industrial society such as New Zealand where a high literacy level and the confidence that goes with this is necessary to participate effectively in the economic and democratic life of the community.

Let me give you some examples from women's own experiences.[4] One woman remembers the very direct connection between the sexual abuse she experienced as a child and *"not wanting to be around anyone"* at school. She recalls:

> *The teachers were always asking me things and putting me in the corner of the room. It felt like my brain had closed off. I was very scared of the male teachers and found it very hard.*

Another woman, who had been abused by her mother's male partner, spoke of her mother's reaction when she disclosed to her.

> *She told me not to make a fuss because he was buying our school uniforms.... From then on my recollection of my schooling is very sketchy.*

Jane articulates really well the impact that abuse had on her in her very first year of school.

> *It resulted in a fear of men, which meant an inability to ask questions or work comfortably with a man teacher.I felt different and awkward with my peers.. The feelings of being a failure, before I had even started, of being powerless and victimised, all blocked my ability to learn. I felt always a victim and totally powerless. So now as as adult,when I am put in a formal education situation all the emotional stress I felt as a shy powerless five year old comes*

> *rushing back. Only as an adult I can run away, and that's what I do.*

These examples illustrate that to learn, girls need to feel and to **be** safe. It points to the significance of gender appropriate facilitators for learning. For adult women also, safety is an issue. There are many stories of women who, when they step outside the control of their partners, are met by a closed fist. Stories abound of burnt books, beatings, rapes.

HOW CAN WE THROUGH ADULT EDUCATION, EMPOWER WOMEN WHO ARE VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE?

I found Nelly Stromquist's (1995)[5] concept of empowerment as "a process to change the distribution of power, both in interpersonal relations and in institutions throughout society" a useful one in the context of violence against women. Patriarchal culture discourages women from having a high opinion of their intellect, their work and their perceptions of how the world is for them. Women's culture within the constraints of male culture does not encourage women to view themselves as being capable of being in control of their lives and the lives of their children. For adult education to be empowering for women, it must assist women to move from a place of dependency to one of being directors of their own lives. At an individual level, this means changing our consciousness and then collectively strategising for the necessary policy changes that will impact positively on women's lives.

A. Change at the Personal Level

Women's generally lower status in patriarchal societies is reinforced by their experiences as the victims of violence. We know of the isolation that many of these women feel. They are rarely beaten in silence but are often also emotionally, psychically and spiritually abused by their battering partners. These experiences have a negative effect on their self esteem as women take on the guilt, shame and responsibility for their partner's actions. This can cause women to believe that they can do nothing to alter their situation. We need to construct and develop women's community education that acknowledges our socialisation of 'learned helplessness', but that also informs women that we **can** take a greater control of our lives. On her course evaluation,[6] one woman wrote:

> *The course enabled me to break a*
> *30 year sentence--*
> *silence.*
> *I have felt totally supported by*
> *women--found my name, my voice*
> *and my face -- slowly reclaiming*
> *bits and pieces.*

Our education programmes need to reflect this different value system. They must permit women to acknowledge and honour their experiences and skills, and encourage personal and cultural self respect, building on this understanding in a supportive group situation. We start by building **on** and building **up** women's self esteem and thus begin the process of creating a different society that is empowering for women and men.

It is indeed a truism that when you educate a woman, you educate her whole family and whanau [extended family], that the effects are expansive and inclusive rather than only of individual benefit. This is increasingly difficult to argue as so much education policy is now dominated by the 'individual good' philosophy of new right economic thinking. But if education is to be empowering, if it is to be truly liberating, then it must build on the knowledge base that women already have and it should recognise our abilities.In this way women will be filled with pride and dignity in their knowledge, and if they are enabled to explore their concerns in a safe environment where they know that these will be seriously considered, they themselves will collectively come up with their own solutions. Our role then as adult educators of women is to be enablers of this process.

B. Curriculum Content

No matter what the purpose of women's adult education, there must be space in class for women to explore collectively the experiences that they have had throughout their lives. There needs to be time and emotional room for women to explore the connections between the course content and our life experiences and our lives being lived at this moment. In fact if life experience is included as course content then it has several positive consequences.

Firstly, it makes these experiences "real" i.e. it gives substance to memories that are retained in women's heads and which can be fragmented and lead to self blame and low self esteem. By breaking the silence and providing a societal framework for discussion and analysis these individual experiences are no longer understood by the woman as her bad luck or wrong choice or fate. Rather they are seen as legitimate and concrete experience-based knowledge.

Secondly, it breaks down the isolation of individual experience which can result in a person feeling either alienated from her own experiences and/or her culture. I ask you to recall my own responses to the academic analysis of incest. It is so powerful for women to perceive that they are not alone in their experience of abuse.

Thirdly, this new knowledge does not leave women as victims but we take on a new identity as survivors. We discover a new found dignity that comes from this collective discussion and understanding of our herstory. I am always amazed and humbled at the forgiveness and understanding that women express toward the abuser, despite the often extensive abuse that they have experienced. I am also impressed with our humanity, and wonderful sense of humour and celebration we share in our survival.

Fourthly, it is from this collective discussion and questioning that women's experiences can be legitimised as knowledge. Also, solutions will be generated leading to action to further the movement for the liberation of women and children from abuse. From a discussion of shared experiences, we can move to looking at the obstacles women have faced and continue to face, and then focus on their strategic needs. Programmes therefore need to be responsive to women's changing and on-going needs. They need to establish stepping stones which will lead eventually to greater personal safety and economic security.

C. Role of Facilitator

The role of facilitator of this liberatory process is one of offering an environment where women can feel confident. It is crucial that as educators we do not reinforce their socialisation of dependency or fall into what I call the "guru trap" of the teacher, having or even appearing to have all the answers. Our position is one of role model, the initiator and collaborator in women discovering their knowledge. It is important that we provide an environment that challenges women to reach beyond their society's definitions of who they are and that redefines the significance of their own and women's knowledge. We also need to redefine the concept of "mistakes" so that women see them not as experiences to be ashamed of or as further "evidence" of their incompetency but rather as "taonga" or treasures that have assisted us to try out new ways and discover newly about ourselves and the universe. They also help us to sort out what works and what doesn't work for us. This is often the first step to defining new goals and planning new life directions.

In my role as an organiser of a programme for women, I ensure that facilitators themselves understand the need to empower women and assist women to find their own way and not encourage their dependency on the facilitator. This can be challenging to tutors, especially if facilitation is the way that they earn their living! But creating dependency will prevent the realisation of the desired outcome of women who are self reliant and self sufficient in their knowledge and their own abilities, who have learnt to trust their instincts, their inner knowledge, and discover their own pathways. Therefore the selection of culturally and experientially appropriate facilitators is important. Their role modelling effect is apparent. But also when tutors can teach from personal experience it not only supports and reinforces the participants' own experiences but gives added value to this form of knowledge.

D. The Role of Programme Organisers

As planners, we need to ensure the safety of the learners. We need to ask how we can establish safe learning environments for girls and women that are free from harassment. Awareness of home situations is also crucial. If the programmes that we organise are not free, we have to ask what do girls and women have to do to pay for them? Can they learn without fear of reprisals from family of origin or family of association? We must ensure that the content is culturally safe, the methodology gender appropriate, and that we build support within the classroom.

Secondly, we should select facilitators that are trained in gender oppression, and if they are not sensitised to this form of oppression, then undertake to train them. Facilitators need to be sensitive to violence as an issue and be aware of its multi- level impact on girls and women's lives. Facilitators need to network closely with appropriate local resource people who can provide on-going support.

Thirdly, we need to ensure the safety of the facilitators. I mean this in its broadest sense. Not only physical but emotional, psychic and spiritual safety. I have experience of the personal cost of working in the area of pornography education without adequate protection. I am sure we are all aware of the high burnout rate among women who work in this field. We need to ensure that we take care of our facilitators and ourselves, so that our valuable expertise will continue to be utilised in the liberation struggle.

Fourthly, we need to put accountability structures in place. This can be in the form of a community group that has strong networks and involvement in the local community, preferably with members who have themselves been participants on the programmes. This will ensure the relevance of our provision, assist us with on-going needs assessment and programme evaluation.

Fifthly is the issue of evaluation. It is important that **we** maintain control of the criteria to measure the success or not of our programmes, rather than the funding body. Our criteria for success may be different. I recall a Violence against Women programme where the funding agency saw success as full attendance throughout its six week duration.

One women didn't return after the first session, which was about wife battering. She obtained sufficient information and support to leave the violent relationship she was in and move herself and her children to a safe place outside the town that she had been living in. For me, the woman participant, and the local women's group, her decision and subsequent non-attendance at the course was an indicator of the success of the programme.

E. The Link Between Violence Education and Empowering Education

If our purpose is to be part of social change that assists in the development of cultures that honour and respect women and the feminine, that encourages women's self-confidence and leads to their economic security, and encourages respect for cultural diversity, then we need to be very broad in our provision. There are several things that we can learn from Violence Against Women education. Adult educators must work to ensure the recognition by society that violence against women and children is contrary to a person's basic human rights, using national and international laws and declarations as necessary. But often it is lack of economic independence that keeps women in unsafe living situations where they face violence, or its fear, daily. Thus we also must establish alongside this pathways to economic security for women, programmes that assist in women becoming economically self-sufficient. However programmes that focus on women's economic development without considering her personal empowerment will not meet women's practical and strategic needs.

Economic security and personal safety are the base-line for all of us. From this place we have choices within our cultural and societal contexts. Violence that women and children experience in intimate relationships has detrimental effects on our self esteem. Later experiences can reinforce this. The result may be that we see no way out to safety. We are bound by the imposed negative image of ourselves as securely as if it was a chain. Changing negative self perceptions, by understanding their roots, needs to be at the core of our educational programmes. This applies whether it is a literacy programme or one whose goal is economic development or self sufficiency, or environmental sustainability. In this way participants develop self confidence.

Women must also be actively involved in selection of the programme's content, which not only should be shaped to meet their needs but be culturally appropriate in its content and delivery. Just as women's lives are made up of a multiplicity of roles and functions, so our programmes need to reflect this by being wholistic and inclusive. If the starting point of a programme is women's own experiences, then we can build on their knowledge base. Through this process, the activity of theorising is demystified and women become active in creating our own traditions, knowledge and education. Providing a supportive environment that emphasizes tolerance of others' opinions and attitudes will foster group bonding and consequent collective action. Extending skills and exposing women to existing information, including what their legal rights are, enables women to re-vision the futures that they desire for themselves and their families. In this way we become active participators in creating a new world for ourselves within our families and communities, and sharing these experiences and visions nationally, regionally and internationally.

Endnotes

1. Child Sexual Abuse Survey, 1992 Otago Women's Health Survey. The total population of Aotearoa-New Zealand is 3.5 million.

2. The two peoples are Maori, the tangata whenua, people of the land, who are the indigenous people of Aotearoa-New Zealand and make up 15% of the total population (1991 Census) and Pakeha, or people of predominantly European descent. These two peoples were signatories to the founding document of the country, the Treaty of Waitangi, signed in 1840.

3. Fifth World Assembly of the International Council for Adult Education held in Cairo, 15-23 September, 1994.

4. The quotations are from assignments written by women attending a "Bridging Course for Women" and quoted with their permission.

5. Stromquist, Nelly P (1995) "The Theoretical and Practical Bases for Empowerment" in C. Medel-Anonuevo (ed) *Women, Education and Empowerment: Pathways towards Autonomy*, UNESCO Institute for Education Studies 5, pp.13-22.

6. Evaluation for Violence Against Women course. For a full discussion of this course, see Marie, Gillian (1989) "Breaking the Silence: Destroying the Lies: An Education Programme on Violence Against Women", *Studies in Continuing Education*, Vol. 11, Number 1, pp.55-65.

REFLECTIONS ON EDUCATION OF MIGRANT WOMEN

Caridad Tharan

I would like to share some thoughts on the above topic based on my experience for the past ten years as a volunteer for migrant support groups in Asia, as a researcher on the topic of migrant domestic helpers, and as an advocate for the rights of migrant workers.

An Overview of International Migration and Development

Economic, political and socio-cultural factors play an important role in the flow of people between countries, whether they are developing, developed or with economies in transition. International economic imbalances, poverty and environmental degradation, as well as the absence of peace and security, human rights violations affect international migration.

It is estimated that the number of international migrants in the world, including refugees, is over 125 million, about half of them in the developing countries. In Asia alone, there are an estimated 15 million migrant workers (documented and undocumented), and women constitute an increasing percentage of this.

The rising demand for cheap labor in the industrialized countries of Asia leads to growth of migration of labor. Among the poor countries in Asia, labor migration continues to be pursued as policy for reducing unemployment and as a lucrative source of foreign exchange. Structural weaknesses in the economy of NICs and Japan are likely to increase demand for cheap imported labor in the coming years. The demand is created by an upward and `service-directed' movement of the labor force - away from the blue-collar to white-collar work. Such demand is concentrated in areas and sectors of the economy where local workers are scarce - jobs in construction, fishing, entertainment and sex, domestic service as well as in low-tech manufacturing. These are called the 3-Ds jobs - dirty, dangerous and difficult. Japan, the NICs as well as Thailand and Malaysia are all importers of construction workers, entertainers and sex workers. Domestic helpers are much sought in the small and prosperous states of Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Taiwan. Fishing industry workers are critically needed in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. Industrial development, characterized by a productive and competitive culture is creating a market for R&R (rest and relaxation) for stressed-out professionals and businessmen. Bars, massage parlors, karaoke lounges, brothels and the like are now part of the landscape of rapidly developing countries in the region.

Feminization of Migration

A recent ILO study states that Asian women are now the fastest growing category of international migrant workers as evidenced by an aggregate outflow of 800,000 female migrant workers a year. In Sri Lanka, majority of migrants are women. By 1980, the participation of women exceeded that of men, increasing to 72.5% in 1993 and 83.5% in 1994. It is estimated that between 1 million to 1.7 million women are currently working as domestic helpers in Southeast Asia and in the Middle East. This number does not include Asian domestic workers in Europe, Canada and East Asia. It is said 384 women leave daily with a passport stamp stating employment as a housemaid. Apart from domestic work, there is a growing number of women recruited to work in factories particularly in garments, for example, in the industrial zones in UAE, Oman, Maldives and Mauritius. Women make up a significant portion of the Filipino migrant community in Europe, approximately 85% or over 400.000 of the estimated half a million population. Women migrants are the entertainers in Japan, the domestics in Saudi Arabia and the garment workers in London.

From the above, one discerns a trend towards the feminization of migration. A number of studies on migrant women acknowledge that this particular area in migration research has assumed importance in recent years. The main reason for this is the shift of women´s role as dependent of male migrants to women as migrants themselves. This shift is a reflection of a modification in migration trends, particularly from the traditional family migration to the labor migration of the Middle East and Asia. In contrast to the migratory movement to the Middle East, comprised in its first phase primarily of male migrants, the movements toward East and Southeast Asia has been initially mostly of women, employed as domestic workers and entertainers. The feminization of migration is characterized by high participation of women in the domestic labor force, in traditional reproductive jobs which is a consequence of stereotypes in the division of labor generalized across borders.

Migration Issues at International Conferences

At major international UN conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), 1994 in Cairo, the World Social summit 1995, in Copenhagen and the International Conference on Women 1995, in Beijing, the issue of migration figured prominently. ICPD viewed migration as "important part of the economic transformations occurring around the world and they present new challenges." It calls upon governments to address the root causes of migration, especially those related to poverty. At the same time, it encourages greater cooperation and dialogue between countries of origin and countries of destination to maximize the positive consequences of migration and mitigate the negative aspects.

Chapter 4 of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action stresses that negative developments have posed difficulties in the quest for "humane, stable, safe, tolerant and just societies." Some of these are widening disparities and inequalities of income and wealth within and among nations and "strains on individuals, families, communities and institutions as a result of the rapid pace of social change, economic transformation, migration (underscoring supplied), and major dislocations of population, particularly in the areas of armed conflict."

The Programme of Action calls for responses to specific social needs of refugees, displaced persons and asylum-seekers, documented migrants and undocumented migrants. It asks governments to ensure fair and equal treatment, including full respect of human rights, appropriate access to economic opportunities and social services; protection against racism, xenophobia, and protection from violence and exploitation.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action seeks to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity. Migration is viewed as part of the global trends and global transformations of the world economy which have brought profound changes in family structures and well-being and have unequal consequences for women and men, including in many cases the sexual exploitation of women. International migration is a factor which contributes to the rise of female-headed households which often bear the brunt and pressure of poverty. Of more than 1 billion poor people in the world today, the great majority are women. The Beijing Platform of Action underscored the need to:

- Ensure the full realization of the human rights of all women migrants, including women migrant workers, and their protection against violence and exploitation;
- Introduce measures for the empowerment of documented women migrants, including women migrant workers, and facilitate the productive employment of documented migrant women through greater recognition of their skills, foreign education and credentials, and facilitate their full integration into the labor force.

Female migration as an issue and area of concern will continue to receive wide attention and increasingly over the years in view of its interconnectedness with other issues, such as the existing model of growth which thrives on cheap and docile labor especially of women, cultural stereotypes which perpetuate conditions of subordination for women, the human rights discourse, the trafficking in women and migrants.

Conditions of Women Migrant Workers

A study conducted by the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women shows that most of the women migrants are employed in the service sector as domestic helpers and entertainers and by the nature of such jobs, become vulnerable to exploitative and abusive conditions. Most of the problems faced by the Philippine government in recent years, concerned Filipinas from these occupational groups.

Household work connotes low status, low wages, isolation and alienation and invisibility from the law. Due to gender inequities, the unpaid work done by women in the home - child care, care of the sick and elderly, household chores - is generally not even considered as work. Hence, domestic work is also devalued as informal work and does not have the same value as formal waged employment. A "foreign domestic worker" also has a low status because of her gender, class and nature of job, in addition to being a foreigner from a poorer country. As domestic work is considered unskilled work, even if one had qualifications, a domestic worker cannot move into a skilled job with hopes of getting a longer term work permit. Constraints in job mobility results in an employer's market leading to depressed wages and abuse of migrant workers.

Many migrant women workers face social, physical, psychological and sexual abuse and are exploited at various stages of the migration process - by recruitment agents and other intermediaries, by employers and even by law enforcement agencies both in the sending and receiving countries. Some of the problems faced by foreign domestic workers are long, irregular working hours, no holidays or days-off, non-payment of wages, confinement to the house ("locked in, locked out"), lack of social contact and support systems, insufficient food, unsuitable accommodation, impounding of passport, verbal abuse, rape and physical abuse sometimes leading to death. Such exploitation, abuse and violence against migrant women workers bear detrimental short-term and long-term effects on the individual, her family and society.

The multi-faceted multi-dimensional and complex issue of violence against women and in particular migrant women workers was the focus of the UN Expert Group meeting on Violence Against Women Migrant Workers in June 1996 in the Philippines. Violence against women migrant workers ranges from verbal and physical abuse, psychological violence such as coercion and intimidation, to sexual harassment, rape and murder. Apart from difficult work conditions, foreign domestic workers are not covered by labor laws and social security provisions in most receiving countries. They are also subject to discriminatory immigration and labor laws which deny them basic human rights, for example, the right to organize or marry a citizen of the receiving country. In extreme cases, pregnancy means outright deportation.

Most of the receiving countries (except for a few) have no adequate legal mechanisms for foreign domestic workers to redress their grievances and very few sending countries provide organizational mechanisms and support services for their migrant workers. These services constitute legal assistance, counselling, temporary shelter, financial and material assistance to those who are ill or have visa problems.

Meanwhile sending country embassies in receiving countries are ill-equipped to deal with the problems of migrant workers particularly migrant women. For one, they lack gender sensitivity. For example, women are ´blamed´ for being sexually molested or worst raped.

From reports of various international and regional meetings on international labor migration and women migrant workers, it is evident that very few governments in sending or receiving countries are acting to protect migrant workers from labor and human rights abuses. Most of the assistance give to migrant workers including legal aid and social services, or awareness raising on migrant workers rights, is being done by NGOs.

Education and Training of Migrants and Migrant Women

Various initiatives and responses to training and educating migrants by governments and mainly by NGOs exist which are aimed towards minimizing the problems and negative effects of living and working in a foreign land, assisting the migrants in coping with their responsibilities and adapting to the economic, social and cultural environment of the host country(ies), helping them make use of services and facilities in such fields as education, language training, health services, transportation, recreation services (if any, in several countries access to such services is limited).

Pre-departure Orientation

Prior to the departure of the migrant worker, an orientation is given on various topics such as the society and culture of the host(receiving) country, immigration rules, spoken language, stipulations and implications of work contract, conditions of work, culture and customs of the host country, institutions and agencies which provide assistance to migrant workers as well as health concerns including HIV/AIDS, etc. In some countries however, most training particularly for domestic helpers is targeted to equip the worker to cope with her work or to foster attitudes that will produce docile, uncomplaining employees. It fails to inform her about legal rights or to prepare her in facing a crisis with employer.

Ideally, training would encompass a gamut of objectives ranging from providing basic information to consciousness raising. It is also suggested that potential migrants be given a broader understanding of the reasons for the unequal relationships between employer and employee, and knowledge of the rights of migrants as specified in ILO conventions, UN Convention on the Rights of Migrant Workers and their Families and other international instruments.

In countries like the Philippines, Pre-Departure Orientation Seminars which are now being conducted by POEA-accredited NGOs seek to orient all departing workers on jobsite conditions, workers´ rights and responsibilities, employment contract terms and conditions and problems inherent to job and how to handle them. In a regional meeting of the Asian Network on Women in International Migration, it was suggested that governments and NGOs in sending countries should set up training centers for prospective migrant workers (including families) so that the worker has adequate information to decide whether or not to seek overseas employment. This would include information about the culture, laws, rights of migrant workers, working and living conditions, problems and possible abuses inherent in domestic work.

On-site Training and Education

Various NGOs including the church, women's organizations and other migrant support groups provide several types of programs and activities designed to provide knowledge and skills to migrants to assist them cope with their jobs or acquire new skills. Some of the courses offered are in business counselling, computer proficiency, cosmetology, language courses (English, Cantonese, Arabic, etc), fashion and design, cooking, nursing aide, sewing and tailoring, etc. Note that these areas are the traditional domains of women's work.

Aside from acquiring new skills, short modules on personality development including enhancing self-esteem are also offered. This is particularly important for migrant workers who are left to do the 3-Ds type of work, dirty, difficult and dangerous.

Leadership courses as well as team-building workshops are also organized to equip migrants to run their own activities (social and cultural) and to develop their organizing and advocacy skills. In host countries like Hongkong where the political environment (at least till June 1997) allows for migrants organizing, protesting, seeking redress of abuses, etc. migrants groups have flourished. For example, the Asian Domestic Workers Union in Hongkong established in 1988 is the first domestic helpers union organized and officially affiliated to independent trade unions at local and international levels. Its main objective is to obtain and maintain just and reasonable rates of wages, hours of work and other conditions of employment and generally to protect the interests of its members. The Union provides education/skills training, seminars, study sessions, counselling services, legal advice, temporary shelter, representation at court hearings, writing statements and letters of support to aggrieved foreign domestic helpers. It offers training on several areas including trade unionism, office management, para-legal training, lobbying techniques, etc.

It must be realized however, that in several host (receiving) countries, the trade unions place a low priority to migrants issues, many in Asia do not even have a programme or agenda for migrant workers. Educating trade unions in this respect is necessary.

Recognition of migrants human rights

One area of education that is wanting is in the recognition of the basic human rights of migrant workers. This awareness and consciousness raising among the migrants themselves and among the sending and particularly host (receiving) countries must be inculcated. Educating the population of both receiving and sending countries is necessary and crucial. Migrants must be able to exercise their rights as migrant workers, as women, and as human beings. Efforts must be carried out to promote just and appropriate recognition and compensation to the contribution of migrant workers to the development of both countries of origin and destination (sending and receiving countries).

Further education and training to build the capacity of migrants themselves to organize and to actively campaign to protect their rights and improve their welfare and conditions, is most needed. Migrants must be educated and empowered to bring to the mainstream the migrants agenda. NGOs support and facilitate. It is important that migrant workers themselves speak out, debate, agitate and demand.

Re-integration of Migrant Worker

The temporary or transient nature of overseas (domestic) work carries with it the expectation of the workers´ return and re-integration into the home country and society, after the contract of employment overseas is fulfilled. The issue itself is not so simple. Certain research findings show that some migrant workers (domestic helpers, for example) do actually want to emigrate and settle in Canada for example, from Hongkong or Singapore. There is also the realization that no matter what the sending countries say or do to attract workers to return, re-integrate and remain home, many do not do so because there is no dramatic improvement in the overall economic conditions of sending countries that could translate to more local jobs and higher incomes for the returnees. Economic considerations still outweigh non-economic factors.

Some studies have documented the social costs of migration, of prolonged absence from families especially with young children - negative effects in the behavior of children, such as proneness to illness, decline in school performance, juvenile delinquency, manifestations of aggressiveness and uncooperative behavior. Lifestyles of families have been affected as well - extravagant and wasteful expenditures, tendency towards materialism and consumerism. Reintegration programmes should therefore be able to respond to all these concerns.

Education for migrants and their families should be directed toward planning for the return, planning for the future, which means making good use of the remittances and setting aside savings. Entrepreneurship development, credit and savings mobilization and livelihood projects are now being carried out by both governments and NGOs but much more support is needed to expand access to capital, markets for products produced, technical advice to improve quality of products.

While re-integration is mainly economic, the socio-psychological aspect should be emphasized as well. For example, for a returning over-qualified (many Filipino women qualified teachers work as DHs overseas) domestic worker, she now faces a problem of sense of deterioration of mental faculties and professional skills.

Empowerment of Migrant Women Workers

Empowerment is a creative and enabling power, the power to be able to do something, to accomplish something. Empowerment is being able to actively solve problems, understand how something works, and learn new skills. When people are organized and united by a common purpose, they feel empowered. Empowerment does not mean power over others, it involves the sense of whole being. When we come together in a group, each one partakes of the collective power, thus, she/he feels empowered. Such power is expressed in terms of tackling problems collectively and solving them.

With empowerment comes a new understanding, the ability to acquire new skills, confidence in solving problems, conflict resolution skills, organizing skills, etc. We reflect on the systems and structures that oppress women, and only when we ponder and reflect on them do we become conscious and aware of the systems, processes and structures which exploit or marginalize women.

Education to empower migrant women workers should be one that allows them to be aware of the forces surrounding the increasing feminization of labor and international migration - the existing paradigm of growth and development facilitated by the process of globalization. It is one that heightens their awareness and consciousness of why women remain to work in the traditional domains of reproductive work, it is one where they seek to understand their vulnerability to abuse, physical and psychological.

Education to empower women migrant workers seeks to provide knowledge and skills to cope, to manage the environment where one works and tries to overcome the dangers, the hazards of being a domestic (household) worker in a foreign land where laws are restrictive for migrants and for women.

Education to empower migrant women workers means acting collectively to challenge one's country's policies of alleviating poverty and unemployment, so that decent jobs and decent wages are provided in the country and therefore migration becomes only an option and not something forced upon or a cruel choice. It means understanding and advocating for a system of education which produces men and women to become productive members of society and able to participate in political and social affairs meaningfully.

Education for empowerment of migrant workers means advocating policies for greater protection of the rights and welfare of migrants, building solidarity with other migrants and migrant support groups.

Finally, empowerment means being able to understand what it means to be a migrant woman worker in a foreign land and being equipped with proper knowledge and skills to maximize whatever benefits there are and minimize or reduce negative or ill effects on the self, the family and the society as a whole. It means being in control and able to make changes and decisions to improve situations as needed.

References

Forum Asia Migrant, Issue 10, December 1995 "Challenging Global Structures- Migrant Women Take Their Struggle to Beijing", Asian Migrant Centre: Hongkong.

Asian and Pacific Migration Journal 1996. Special Issue: "Asian Women in Migration", Vol. 5, No. 1, Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, Philippines.

N. Heyzer, G Lycklama ä Nijeholt and N Weerakoon (eds), *The Trade in Domestic Workers; Causes, Mechanisms and Consequences of International Migration, 1994*, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Selected Papers from the International Conference on "Migrant Workers Challenging Global Structure, "September, 1996, Seoul, Korea. Organized by Asian Migrant Center, Hongkong.

Selected Papers from "Consultative Meeting of Asian Network on Women and International Migration (ANWIM), October 9 - 12, 1996, Batam Island, Indonesia. Organized by GAD Programme, Asian and Pacific Development Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Srilatha Batliwala, 1994. "The Meaning of Women's Empowerment: New Concepts from Action," Population Policies Reconsidered, ed. By G. Sen, A Germaine and L Chen, Harvard School of Public Health, Boston, MA.

"MINISTRY OF MANPOWER ? MAN-POWER? MUM, DOES THAT MEAN MEN ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN WOMEN?": Sharing Experiences in Gender Training in Education

Sheila Parvyn Wamahiu

"I am not a Feminist but ..."[1]

In 1975, as Editor of the college magazine, I took advantage of my position to devote the entire issue to women. For me, it was a big event. I was commemorating the International Women´s Year, and the inauguration of the First Women´s Decade for Women. Young and enthusiastic, I decided to conduct a survey of people´s attitude towards the women´s issue in Islamabad where my college was located. I cannot remember all the details now, but what does stand out after all these years is people´s hostility: "This is all imported ideology ...", "a sign of western imperialism and decadence", "we do not need western feminists to tell us what to do..."! The women´s liberation movement that so dominated the media in the 1960s - harrowing images of shrieking-bra-burning-demonstrating women in Los Angeles, New York and other western capitals - clearly influenced people´s perception of what the struggle for women´s rights and development was all about; and helped to justify perpetuation of the status quo. The substantive issues remained engulfed in a melodramatic mantle.

Twenty years later, in a different country and different socio-cultural context, history seems to be repeating itself. The substantive issues that were discussed and deliberated on - from the management of poverty to elimination of various types of inequalities between different social categories including people with disabilities, the displaced and refugees, minority groups, races, castes and classes - were once again overshadowed, thanks to the western media, by the issue of sexual orientation! For the majority of African women in Beijing, this was a non-issue and it certainly did not dominate their agenda. And yet when we returned home to Kenya, the twelve critical areas of concern - areas that are of serious developmental concern - were ignored, the Conference trivialized, and women made to feel guilty for daring to articulate and chart out a framework for a better, more equitable and just world. In Kenya, women delegates to the Fourth World Conference on Women, were asked by The-Power-That-Be to leave behind what they had seen and heard in Beijing so as not to "corrupt" the "impressionable" and "gullible" Kenyan men and women!

Hardly any of the women and men who represented Kenya officially at Beijing would not describe themselves as femininists of any shade whatsoever. Radicalism is something that they publicly (and privately too) they abhor. But what they heard and saw in Beijing seemed to make sense, even to them, for the development of the individual as well as the nation. They felt that Beijing had an important message to convey to all; in the immediate post-Beijing period, the challenge was how to transmit this message without treading on the toes of the male-dominated Establishment? Eventually, the "officially designated women´s leaders" felt that in order to pacify the Establishment, gender equality in the private domain needed to be sacrificed in favour of equality in the public domain. One step forward, two steps backwards ...

That Animal Called Gender!

In 1975, the word gender in its socio-cultural sense had not gained much currency outside academia at least in the Third World countries. Today, the word is bandied about all over the place without much evidence of an adequate or proper understanding of the concept. When not being used in its grammatical sense, gender is either equated with women (as in women´s issues) or regarded as a thing, some sort of an "animal" that exists apart from us. In a recent gender sensitization workshop for members of a Gender and Education Task Force in an African country that shall remain nameless, one (male) participant who incidentally holds the position of a Director in a government department, asked: "Am I a gender"? It is not uncommon for well meaning individuals to state in public functions: "Well, gender is here to stay, so we better accept it"!

It takes time, patience, knowledge and creativity to persuade people - both men and women - that gender is not an animal or a monster out there, waiting to swallow us up or precipitate the Day of Judgement. Gender is a socio-cultural construct with some biological roots, the extent of which is yet to be conclusively determined. It is a concept, and like all concepts, the creation of human minds, an analytical tool created to explain social behaviour, interrelationships and power play. It is a socio-political concept that helps us to classify the human world, in much the same way that does race, ethnicity, social class, caste and religion just to name a few of the more commonly accepted principles of human social organization. It is certainly not an animal that exists out there, outside us, alienated from us. As cultural beings, we all acquire gender from the time we are born in a continuous process until the moment of our death; it is sex that is immutable, modern technological interventions aside (incidentally products of our contemporary culture), we die with the particular set of genitals that we are born with.

Being cultural constructs, gender attributes can and do change, in much the same way that culture changes. For us gender trainers, this is so obvious that we tend to take it for granted. Yet, in gender sensitization sessions, the issue of culture, gender and change are among the most controversial and stormy. There is a constant mixing up of biological and socio-cultural capabilities of human males and females; I have been amazed at the striking parallel between the thinking processes of small children and full grown adults when it comes to debating on the issue of gender!

But Ma´am, Women Cannot Drive ...!

I confess, I seem to subvert the cause for gender equity by my refusal to drive. I do not drive because I am a coward, and it is long since that I have stopped making apologies for it. When my first born son was about four or five, I found him arguing with his friends that women cannot drive because his much adored mother cannot do so. Some seven years later, I found history repeating itself when my younger son (I don´t have daughters) echoed his older brother´s words, telling my (female) friend, who was incidentally in the driver´s seat, ready to zoom off from my driveway, that women don´t drive. Confronted with the fact that my friend was actually driving, he corrected himself by concluding: "Well, then mummies don´t drive"!

One need not take these observations by the five year olds very seriously. Children of that age learn best from their immediate environment, from the people they interact with most. And they are flexible; presented new evidence, they are willing to revise their opinion.

At that particular point in time of their little lives, my sons´ world revolved around me; surely if my mum, who is not less than a superwoman, cannot to something, how can any other lesser women do so?

I would have dismissed my son´s observations without much thought, knowing that they would learn sooner or later that they had jumped to the wrong conclusions. But amazingly, I found essentially the same argument being forwarded in a sociology class by a male post-graduate student! Asked to differentiate between biological (sex) roles and cultural (gender) roles of human males and females, the student, a mature man who had several years of teaching experience in the field, insisted that driving was biologically pre-determined in favour of men. "Madam", he told be in all seriousness, "I have tried my best to teach my wife how to drive. But she is absolutely unable to do so. That´s because women are not biologically equipped to drive. Do you know of any men who cannot drive?", he concluded his argument with this very dubious conclusion. As can be imagined, I simply did not have the courage to tell him that I, with all my educational qualifications, was his wife´s soul-mate as far as driving was concerned! Having admitted to my driving disability would have only served to perpetuate a stereotype about women and men´s inherent psychomotor and intellectual abilities.

The Parallels between Racist and Sexist Arguments

Stereotypes are glorified untruths. One may argue that they are based on some element of truth - yes, I cannot drive, I am a woman; therefore, all women cannot drive. Mr. X´s wife is a woman; she cannot drive; therefore, all women cannot drive. But have we not all heard arguments about the (inferior) capacity of Blacks not only in the segregated American South and apartheid South Africa, but as a constantly recurring theme in different contexts and times, cloaked in pseudo-scientific terminology. Socio-biology has been particularly guilty in my mind, for propagating both racism and sexism (Remember "the Naked Ape" by Desmond Morris?): the African has smaller cranial capacity than the Caucasian; women have smaller brains than men; African´s have lower IQ than Caucasians; women are less intelligent then men and so on and so forth. As gender trainers, dismantling the myths and stereotypes pose a definite challenge. It involves a process of desocialisation and resocialisation; of deconstruction and reconstruction. And from experience, making the participants see that parallels between the racist and sexist arguments, is a big step forward towards changing rigid mind sets.

But from Time Immemorial ...

A big step forward, but certainly not the end of the battle. There are those cultural purists, both men and women, to whom culture is static, divinely ordained, immutable, supreme and synonymous with tradition. And tradition, somewhere along the line, is deemed equivalent to "nature". And if tradition/nature has ordained that women´s role is to serve men unconditionally, and remain beasts of burden, and be seen and not heard, then do we have the right to challenge the status quo? Are we not invoking the wrath of the gods by trying to tamper with nature/culture/tradition?

Perhaps it is my anthropological training, but I do like to discuss the concepts of culture and tradition in as much depth as time will allow during the gender sensitization workshops. From a social scientific perspective, tradition is but one aspect of culture, and not the totality. Nor is it subordinate to it.

All social practices (in human society), whether we like them or not, whether they are positive or negative, are cultural. As human beings we are cultural beings; language, religion, value systems, forms of government, the economy - are all aspects of culture. Therefore, to say that female genital mutilation is a cultural practice to me is not very useful ... it is just stating the obvious. Going to Western-type schools is a cultural practice in many parts of the contemporary world, as well as in attending conferences and publishing scholarly papers in supposedly reputable journals part of the academic culture. Gender sensitization workshops is a cultural practice in the contemporary world, an accepted means of conscientising people into the norms of gender equity and equality.

Female genital mutilation, like school attendance, conferences, and gender sensitization workshops are all part and parcel of the contemporary cultures of various groups of peoples. They are rooted in traditions, in different kinds of traditions, with various time-depths. And they have been evolving in form and meaning, just as the contexts in which they are embedded have been undergoing changes.

It is important that the gender trainer is able to sensitize the participants to this dynamism of human societies and cultures. No society, if it is to survive, can afford to be frozen in time and space. That cultures are static was the construct of the colonial anthropologist.

It is important for the gender trainer not to appear confrontational and condemnatory. Changing of attitudes requires the ability to see into the world of others, understand their perspective, look for the positive in their cultures and use those aspects to induce changes in the mind-sets of the target groups. Most arguments for retaining the status quo boil down to "But from time immemorial we have been doing things this way ...!"

But have we? A good gender trainer should be able to plant the seeds of doubt into the cultural purist: to what extent do the traditions of today, exactly replicate the practices of yesterday? Are we not doing things differently from our grandparents? And at any rate, the traditions of today were the innovations of yesterday, just as some of the innovations of today will become the traditions of tomorrow.

Human history also demonstrates generous borrowing of cultural traits and beliefs from one part of the world to another. Sometimes the "borrowing" has been imposed, as the colonial experience demonstrates; at other times reciprocal. As Ralph Linton writing in the 1960s observed, the average 100% ethnocentric (and patriarchal) American male is really a fusion of a myriad of cultures: for example, the tie that is today so much a part and parcel of formal male attire throughout the world, is of Croatian origin; the trousers is believed to have originated in Central Asia; the cigarette (tobacco) that many smoke is a Native American invention. And yet we are ready to stake our lives for what we believe is the preservation of the purity of our cultures!

The Right to Harass!

The defense of what is perceived to be Africanness is taken to its absurd limits when it is used to justify sexual harassment and abuse. Last year in Kenya, there were a number of horrifying incidents of sexual violence. Some women in Nairobi and other urban areas were subjected to mob justice allegedly because of the "indecent way they were dressed". Members of both genders were involved in meting our "justice" to the "erring" women: they were beaten up, and stripped of their clothes "so that they could be taught a lesson in morality that they would not easily forget"!

This issue came up for discussion in a gender sensitization workshop for academics in one public university in Nairobi. Almost all the participants, both female and male, were of the view that the attacks were justified . "The women asked for it; it is against our sense of morality; it is unAfrican to dress in mini-skirts and expose ones body to the public", argued the participants, themselves dressed in ways not indigenously African. "Well, what was the African way of dressing?" I asked. Silence. The truth is, among many Kenyan African ethnic groups women wore grass-mini-skirts. In many ethnic groups, either bikini-like garments covered the breasts, or the breasts were left totally exposed. That was the acceptable mode of dressing, and no one would use it an excuse to sexually harass or abuse another.

What I found most worrying about the above-cited discussion was (a) the clear condoning of violence and intolerance by the group; and (b) the conceptual confusion and failure to distinguish between the African and colonial-puritanical traditions. It is worrying because the group was constituted of academics, who are supposed to represent the country´s intelligentsia.

Gender and the Culture of Violence

Worrying, but perhaps not so surprising. We live in an increasingly violent society made so by our political structures, lifestyles, mass media and even our education systems. In an undergraduate Sociology class comprising mature students with years of teaching and administrative experience, I raised the issue of the use of corporal punishment. Again, I got the same response: use of corporal punishment is African, it is traditional. Argued one (male) Head teacher: "Madam, you are not African, so you can´t understand it. European and Asian kids don´t need to be; but you see, our (African) children will learn nothing until they are beaten"!

In a different context, a male research assistant told be in all seriousness: "Madam, I only beat my wife when she is difficult". "Difficult? What do you mean by difficult", I asked him for clarification. "Well, when she just cannot understand what I am trying to tell her. Am I not right in doing so?"

Whether the right to be violent is inherently African or not is a debatable issue. What is not debatable, however, is the fact that our educational institutions are breeding places of violence and injustice. In gender discriminatory situations, generalized violence easily translates into sexual violence and abuse. As in the case of the infamous St. Kizito in Kenya where 19 girls were raped and killed by their male peers infuriated at them for not joining in on a strike against the school administration. The Deputy Head of the school, a woman, tried to protect the boys´ actions in those infamous words: "After all, the boys meant no harm. They only wanted to rape"!

It is a challenge during gender sensitization workshops to be able to show the relationship between the violence in the classroom and the violence without; with violence against boys and girls, and gendered violence. One gets the impression that (non-sexual) violence as a disciplinary measure seems to be meted out to boys more than to girls, partly because of the view that boys can and need to withstand more pain than girls; that violent discipline is essential for constructing total men; that spare the rod and spoil the child is even more applicable for boys than for girls. There are other more potent psychological tools of punishment that can effectively control the female gender and extract submission from them. During the sensitisation workshop referred to earlier, for members of a national Gender Task Force which I attended as a participant, I was informed that government was considering using corporal punishment only for boys! Imagine the consequences should such move be instituted: would not violence against girls increase in the schools and streets?

Gender as a Criteria of Quality

It is rewarding, however, when as a gender trainer in education one is able to change the perspective of the participants towards the entire educational process, and get them to redefine the meaning of educational quality to include gender as a critical variable. The first step is to get participants to see that a good quality school is much more than its physical facilities, and equipments, and academically qualified teachers. A school may have all this and still be "poor". While quantitative indicators are important, they are not decisive; qualitative measures which put the child and the teacher at the centre are of infinitely more accurate indicators of good quality schooling. And if the school really is to promote education for all, then that "all" must embrace both girls and boys.

Research in many parts of the world, Africa included, demonstrate the unequal treatment of boys and girls in the classroom. Even when the curriculum design is officially egalitarian and well-intentioned, gender discriminatory practices characterize the teaching-learning process in our educational institutions. Quite often, these practices are subconsciously enacted in a replay of the power relationships outside the classroom. Teachers and pupils all bring into the classroom the values and beliefs that they have learnt outside, and are reinforced through gender insensitive text-book content, teaching materials, teacher-pupil interaction, peer group interaction and the school culture interaction and the school culture itself. But more often than not, teachers and school administrators are blind to this. They fail to realize that the "hidden" curriculum sometimes singly, other times in conjunction with the official curriculum construct success or failure in the classroom.

To me, the most satisfying moment in my experience as a gender trainer came when a Head teacher from Lesotho observed in his evaluation of a gender sensitization workshop: "This workshop has opened my eyes. Now when I am about to retire from the teaching profession, I have been made to see the crimes that we have been committing in our classrooms in the name of education. We shall have to retrain ourselves as teachers. The Ministry of Education should see to this".

Language and Gender: What is all the Fuss About?

Language is a powerful tool of socialization. Language, whether written, oral or physical, helps us to interpret situations, understand the world around us, and find our own niche in society. Unfortunately, for women and girls, this niche is more often than not a subordinate and insecure one reflected in the way language is used - and here, I refer specifically to the English language. Other languages doubtless have their own problems.

Contemporary English is essentially patriarchal. When I think in English, God becomes a He. It somehow seems blasphemous to refer to God as "It" or "She". Yet, according to the religion that I was born in, that is Islam, God has no human attributes, God is neither male nor female, and has no sons or daughters or consorts - is blasphemous to assign any humanness (not humaneness) to God. Why then do all the standard translations of the Quran use the masculine pronoun to refer to God? When I think in my mother tongue, which is Bengali, I have no problem with visualizing (the Islamic concept of) God as either masculine or feminine. Bengali grammar does not allow it. Now, one can easily say, what is all this fuss about? Does it really matter whether God is a man or a woman? And does usage of the masculine gender in the third person singular make God into a male?

The problem is, in the English language, the masculine gender is used in so many different ways. If capitalized, "he" is elevated to divine status, depending on the context of its use. The masculine gender also embraces the feminine under certain circumstances. But it is never the other way around. And finally, of course, the masculine gender represents the male. To me, all this is very confusing and I wonder why everyone does not get equally confused.

But perhaps they do, and will not admit it. I was attached to the Ministry of Manpower during a short assignment in Seychelles. My little son, who was six years old at the time, overheard me talking about the Ministry to somebody. The word "manpower" obviously attracted his attention. After listening for a while, he interrupted me: " Ministry of Manpower? You mean there is a Ministry of Manpower?" "Yes, there is", I answered. "Well, is there a Ministry of Manpower? You mean there is a Ministry of Manpower?" "Yes, there is", I answered. "Well, is there a Ministry of Womanpower?" he asked me. "No, there isn't", I responded. "Then does that mean that men are more powerful than women?"

Explaining the intricacies of the English language to a six-year old is really not my forte. And frankly speaking, I do not think I managed to convince him as to why a ministry should be so named. Several months later, I overheard him telling his friends in Nairobi: "You know, these people in Seychelles are so funny. They have a Ministry of Manpower"!

With adults, it is the other way round - one needs to convince them why the Ministry of Manpower should really be the Ministry of Human Resources Development or have some other gender inclusive title. The same argument is brought forward again: After all, from time immemorial, the word man has included the concept of woman. But has it? To my knowledge, the use of the generic 'he' to include both genders became legal in Britain through an Act of Parliament, in 1850 which is really less than 150 years ago.

Language, as an integral aspect of culture and like culture, is dynamic. It changes through time and space as it comes into contact with other languages and as technology develops. Chaucerian and Shakespearian English were quite distinctive; and frankly speaking, quite difficult for me to understand without the aid of old English dictionaries. There are significant differences in American and the Queen's English. When I first joined Kenyatta University as a lecturer, I had problems interpreting the written English of my students.

It is true that attitudes and habits die hard. But it is also that people are willing to change if the rationale for changing is presented to them in a reasonably convincing way. Once convinced that gender stereotyped language actually misrepresents reality, that it kills aspirations, lowers achievement, creates confusion by its ambiguity, and harks back to the past, participants are generally willing to try.

But they need to be taught the rules for using gender responsive It is not enough to tell people to discard something; they need to be given its replacement. There must be reinforcement. Unfortunately, many people in the field of gender and development are themselves not consistent specially when it comes to the use of gender responsive language. I know GAD experts who insist on using the word "Chairman" for reasons I have not been able to fathom. I have heard women vehemently rejecting the word "Chair" or "Chairperson": During a pre-Beijing meeting, an African woman activist thundered at a meeting: "I am the Chairman, not Chairperson. Kindly refer to me as such".

It is not uncommon to use Chairperson when referring to a woman only: "Madam Chairperson ...." but "Mr. Chairman ...". The first thought that comes to my mind is, are men not persons too?

If there is no consensus among people in the field of GAD, then it makes the task for gender trainers all that more difficult.

The Lessons Learnt:

The gender trainers´ task is to facilitate changes in people´s perceptions about the social world; about their attitude towards the opposite gender and about themselves as human beings; about getting participants to see the world through gender lenses. It is about getting people to realize that the world is not monolithic, but pluralistic with each category of people, adults and children, men and women, different ethnicities - all having a the right to live and prosper in this world in equal terms and mutual respect. The gender trainers´ task is to get people to see that gender sensitization is part and parcel of the process of human liberation.

The gender trainers´ task may appear to be subversive to some. Some may feel it to be threatening to their lifestyle, and may see a world riddled with insecurities because of the changes that is being proposed. That is as it should be; the challenges facing the gender trainer should never be underestimated.

Successful gender sensitization requires a democratic environment created by gender trainers who are themselves:

- democratic
- creative
- adaptable
- empathetic
- sensitive to the views of others
- approachable and
- allows for active participation.

The gender trainers job is to facilitate and not to spoon-feed. It is much easier to lecture than to allow people to argue, challenge and dialogue. It is much easier to provide the answers then to get people to find the answers. It is much easier to openly take sides in an argument, then to guide them to gender responsive solutions.

Participants should be encouraged to ask questions freely, express their views and emotions openly. Debates are vital in gender sensitization workshops. Lecturing or preaching to people on why they should be gender sensitive may have exactly the opposite effect.

Finally, it is vital that gender trainers should be well-informed and constantly update themselves with current and popular gender issues and debates. A gender team that is not only gender-balanced, but also balanced in terms of areas of academic expertise and facilitation styles is the ideal.

Endnote

1. This paper is based on the experiences of the writer gathered through facilitating gender sensitisation workshops in various parts of Eastern and Southern Africa, and teaching post-and under-graduate students at Kenyatta University, Kenya. In most cases, the gender sensitisation workshops targetted wide-range of educational personnel in Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Botswana Swaziland, Zanzibar and Tanzania.

WOMEN AND ADULT LEARNING, CHALLENGES TO THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENTS

Varda Muhlbauer

An analysis of the legal dimension of the Status of Women in Israel shows that the existing laws in Israel, especially in regard to women in the work place, are relatively progressive. The law guarantees equal opportunities in the work place, forbids discrimination based on gender, marital or parental status. Clearly, despite this, equal status according to law is not objectively implemented in the field and does not reflect the spirit of the law :

1. A gap remains between men's and women's salaries and levels of earning.
2. Women are concentrated in occupational branches which pay low salaries with minimal possibilities for advancement .
3. Representation of women in important positions is very low and certainly does not reflect the sizable number of women in the work force.

How then can one explain the difference between formal - stated, legislative policy and what one finds in the field?

First and foremost, it must be assumed that the legislation is not sufficient, and there is a need to vigorously and consistently enforce policies. One gets the impression that the lack of consistent policies and the lack of readiness on the part of women to demand a response from employers and the State in cases where there is deviation from the spirit of the law, explains the fact that the law remains only as an indication of good intentions, and is not realistically reflected in the field.

However, beyond the requirement to enforce policies, one gets the impression that the problems that exist both in the representation of women in positions of power, in their earning levels and in the nature of their positions in the job market, may be explained by means of two intricate processes : System of external obstacles and System of internal obstacles.

System of External Obstacles

a. Making access to the informal organizational structures difficult.

The informal organizational systems are masculine,both in composition and in its organizational culture. This system does not allow for a massive influx of women. This factor causes specific difficulties in the advancement of women in the organization since the road to advancement often goes through informal channels. It is clear, therefore, that the laws which promise equal opportunities cannot promise equal access to advancement possibilities.

In many cases it is very difficult to prove the separatism or the parochial character of the informal systems connected to organizations. They are very well camouflaged in the rhetoric of complex messages and therefore facts relating to different standards for the advancement of men and women are exposed with great difficulty.

b. A great burden placed particularly on women working full time jobs.

Despite the fact that women in Israel refute the traditional stereotype that the woman's place is in the home, and support enthusiastically the idea of women going out to work, it seems that many of them still see the central task of women to be one surrounding home and family. This fact causes them to take on the added burden of traditional responsibilities, i.e. managing the home and raising children. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that despite this proven burden (Markus 1990) there are psychological and social benefits to women's work. The work is linked to empowerment and brings general satisfaction. As to the interaction between higher education and status of employment and thinking and behaving according to traditional stereotypes , findings of various research done in Israel show contradictory results. Hartman (1993) found that educated, secular women, born in Israel, want and are interested in equal division of work in the home, while another researcher (Mannheim 1984) found that despite higher education and higher status in the work place, the division of jobs is perceived on traditional lines, including the responsibility of the woman to do the work at home.

c. *Lack of support and few important contacts.*

Women in Israel report that they do not receive the type of institutionalized assistance they expect from women's organizations. Women are assisted by the services that the organizations offer such as Day Care Centers or help with critical legal problems, but they don't see the organizations as a source of political power nor as the vehicle to aid and support the status and the advancement of women. These findings are of interest in light of the various trends in western countries where women choose to join women's groups and women's organizations and view them as a source of strength and personal support.In any case, the lack of institutionalized support and active participation in support groups causes women to lose class perspective of their status and they are inclined to see their place in the family and community as a personal issue cutting them off from the socio-cultural context.

System of Internal Obstacles

The feminist perspective in sociological analysis maintains that socialization through a gender related position leaves an impression on every realm of our lives. The basic assumption is, therefore, that the conceptualization of maleness and femaleness is at the basis of all human experience. It would therefore be unreasonable to assume the possibility of any social action that does not fall into basic gender related categories.

Interviews done in Israel revealed that women have a tendency to characterize themselves first and foremost as "wives and mothers". Every other role, if at work or in the community is perceived as secondary.

While writing this paper, I was reminded of a radio program I had heard. The participants were interviewed individually to discuss male/female relationships at work. The individual interviewees complained vehemently that there must be a stand taken that the work place would be a "sex free zone" (poster language that I saw in Sweden). In other words, a place in which people react to one another in authentic, relevant terms, separate and apart from the social - gender context . The claim won the support of the individual participants who saw it as a desirable sign for positive future evolvements in the world of work. At this stage, one of the interviewees said the revelations woven into the discussion by the participants in the studio seem to contradict the basics. He claims that it would be unreasonable to expect a man to put aside, forfeit and disconnect himself from the diversified contacts which enable him to experience relationships with the second sex. He related to the deeply - rooted characteristics of some of the images, to the fact that a portion of the negative images of women are integrated in Israeli folklore even to commercial exploitation of the bodies and sexuality of women. These statements were provocative and unpleasant to hear. However, when thinking back, it seems as if he was correct. It should be apparent that in the foreseeable future the strong sociological impact of gender cannot be erased .

What are the major consequences of the sex-roles, the self-image and women's place in society ?

The feminists' criticism tends to speak about internalization of values of minority groups which weaken personal autonomy. This internalization of the psychology of minority groups explains the following:

1. Cultivating a sense of denial among women in spite of the findings regarding the gap between men and women in the socio-economic condition.

2. Level of low aspirations regarding personal achievements in the sphere of society in general and of career in particular.

There is no doubt that the experience of lack of power is central to defining the female sex role. When women were asked about what their parents and those around them expected of them as youngsters, they recollect that the things that stand out are: obedience, helping with household chores, passivity, recognition of different roles and life styles of boys as opposed to girls. These expectations from girls emphasizes the absence of incentives to become active, aspire to excellence, struggle with the challenges or take chances.

When the traditional feminine orientation (internalized in early stages of life) also serves as basic orientation in the socio - economic world , the outcome turns out to be negative both from society's point of view and certainly from the women's point of view.

Women in management positions whom we interviewed about their varied experiences at work reported as follows :

I am inclined to burden myself ... don't know how nor do I want to ask for help... prefer to solve the problem myself...

I avoid confrontations with my superiors ...many times I depend on their sensitivity and good intentions...:

I am faithful to the superintendent ....am inclined to follow instructions that I receive....

It is difficult to be a "boss"...prefer to do professional work...

Very empathetic to the superintendent...am able to understand what makes him behave as he does...he needs strength...

One can draw the following conclusions:

> **confusion is created between the character of female sex roles and responsible positions in specific jobs in society and at work; and the tension is created as a result of the centrality of gender roles to the psychological make - up of female identity.**

Therefore, a recognizable portion of the solutions that women choose - consciously or unconsciously - **are defeatist, passive and sometimes self destructive.**

There is no doubt that over the last years, in Israel as in many other countries in the world, great changes have occurred in regard to the perceived role of women in society in general and in the work place in particular. However, the changes have not brought about a real revolution! The concept of equality has not reached the stage of a satisfactory fruition. **Ambivalence, confusion** and **distress remain prevalent**. People bring with them to their organizational positions the existing cultural image surrounding the organization. Society's thinking in the context of differences between the sexes creates difficulties for women and men. However, there is no doubt that when speaking about absorbing women into important financial and societal positions, the "otherness " of the women in a man's world stands out in particular. Many women do not acclimatize quickly and certainly not easily in a "man's"world.They pay a very high price. Society on its side, loses the opportunity to utilize the rich human resources that women bring with them to socio-economic organizations.

The training program developed by NA'AMAT

When planning a training program there is a need to resolve issues regarding essential questions pertaining to masculine and feminine concepts and the characterization of gender roles. In this respect, it is known that a conflict will arise on questions of the hegemony of one of two dominant viewpoints:

- One approach says that there is a place to look for and emphasize the differences between men and women and to see the individual functions, in family and society, as founded on complementary division of labor between women and men.
- The second approach says that there is a disturbing exaggeration when attempting to grasp the differences between women and men and therefore, we must strive to minimize and eradicate distorted reflections of the differences in the current socio-economic structure.

The philosophy underlying the three training programs I am about to indicate, allows the participants to reach awareness and understanding regarding macro socio - economic trends and gain better insight into the way gender socialization has shaped their lives. In addition, the training puts great emphasis on skill - acquisition.

A. PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

Study Goals

The goal of the training program is to encourage women to identify and give expression to their personal needs teaching them how to have more control over their lives and their roles in the family and the work place.

Subjects to be Covered in the Course

- Self-evaluation - "Where am I today and where do I want to go?"
- Individual rights - "These are subjects that I by-pass out of fear, shame and lack of confidence, and how can I compete?"
- Assertive communication patterns
- Spheres of power and influence
- My immediate environment - strengths, brakes, and handicaps
- Program for change - difficulties and opportunities
- Ways to combine work and family
- Building a support network

Number of meetings: 8
Duration of each meeting:
- 3 Academic Hours

B. COPING WITH STRESS - AT HOME AND AT WORK

Study Goals

The goal of the course is to make it possible for women to understand the phenomena of stress and to decrease distress caused by life styles vulnerable to stress.

Subjects to be Studied in the Course

- Distinguish among the various psycho-physiological components of the phenomena of stress
- Distinguish between healthy stress

(good) and negative stress (bad)

- Identify cognitive-behavioral signs which intensify stress experiences
- Develop a mode of life which will strengthen control of stress
- Personal program to define goals to change status and life-styles in order to improve the general quality of life

Number of meetings: 5
Duration of each meeting:
- 3 Academic hours.

C. PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT IN THE WORK PLACE

Study goals

The complex modern work world, specialized and competitive, requires a continuous process of learning, acquiring skills that will aid the employee to reach her personal and professional goals. Findings indicate that women tend to underestimate their position and relevance to the workplace and tend to avoid tactics which might empower their position and contribute to an effective style at work.

The goals of the study are :

1. to impart practical / rational attitudes
2. to learn relevant skills
3. to develop effective work habits.

Instruction Methods

The course will integrate practical experiences with theoretical knowledge, through exercises, analyzing events, simulations, and training films.

Subjects to be Covered in the Course

- Identifying sources of power
- Basic marketing principles
- How to be interviewed and succeed
- Principles of communication between individuals
- Giving and receiving criticism
- Positive, rational thought
- Dealing with and controlling anger
- The need to adopt a clear position and individual initiative
- How to build joint projects and establish beneficial cooperation
- Image and body language
- Identifying strengths, barriers and preliminaries for personal development
- Coping with stress at home and in the work place.

Number of meetings: 12
Duration of each session:
- 4 academic hours

References

Hartman, H. 1993. *Economic and families in Israel.* pp. 135 - 146 in Women in Israel ed. Azmon ,Y and Izraeli, D.N. Transaction Pub. New Brunswick.

Mannheim, B., Schiffrin, M. 1984. *Family structure, job characteristics, rewards and strains as related to work - role centrality of employed and self - employed professional women with children.* Journal of Occupational Behavior; 5,2, pp. 83 - 101.

Markus, E.J.S. 1990. Does it pay for a woman to work outside her home ? *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* ; 21,3,pp. 397 - 411.

THEMES, DREAMS AND STRATEGIES:
Some Reflections on the Chiangmai Seminar

Joyce Stalker

The Chiangmai seminar-workshop brought together over thirty women from around the world to discuss the empowerment of women through adult learning. Over the period of five days we shared information through paper presentations and vigorous discussions, we worked on making the Agenda for the Future and the Draft Declaration for CONFINTEA V gender sensitive and we laughed and discovered Thailand together. At the end of the workshop, we had covered a wide range of topics. At Chiangmai, I informally recorded discussions and debates as they arose. The notes from those five days give some interesting insights into the many themes which cross-cut the seminar sessions and discussions. Based on those notes, I am attempting in this paper to capture the meta rather than micro stories of the seminar-workshop, to represent its holistic nature rather than its details and the general rather than the particular character of the discussions. The paper is meant to portray not just the themes which emerged, but also the dreams and strategies of the participants. Although this paper reflects my own personal reading of the seminar-workshop, I hope that it gives some sense of the richness, energy and commitment in the discussions. More importantly, I hope that it encourages all who read this paper to continue the dialogue and strategising begun there.

A CRITICAL JUNCTURE POINT

One of the strongest and most frequently recurring themes in the workshop was the sense that CONFINTEA V would be located at a critical juncture point for women's empowerment. It seems to be a moment of particularly strong possibility and potential. On the one hand, there is the possibility to build on the momentum created by other conferences and commitments to the empowerment of women. On the other hand, the moment seems to hold the potential for a bleaker prospect if it is not grasped and moved forward. There is the chance that the momentum can turn to stagnation, reversal or retreat from the gains already made.

Discussions in the workshop identified this moment of possibility as the result of three convergent phenomena. First, CONFINTEA builds on a series of prominent conferences in which issues related to both education and women have dominated. Among those have been: the Jomtien World Conference on Education For All (1990), the UNESCO World Decade of Cultural Development (1988-1997), the UNDP World Development Decade (1991-2000), the Rio Conference on Environment (1992), the Cairo International Conference on Population (1994), the Social Development Summit (1995) and the Beijing International Conference on Women (1995).

Second, since the last international conference devoted to the problems of adult education (Paris,1985), the presence of women has increased notably. At that conference, a key issue was defined as the need to give high priority to women's education. Subsequently, women have gained visibility in many areas of practice, theorizing and research within the field of adult education.

Third, women's issues and concerns have gained a higher place on many local, national and global agendas. There has tended to be a stronger acknowledgment of the importance of women´s roles and of the need to extend women´s opportunities and access to participation in education, policies and society in general. Although often an economic imperative has driven these shifts, the tendency none the less is identifiable.

As noted in the workshop, however, these scenarios do not tell the whole story. There is a tension between the promises, the possibilities, and the real progress towards empowerment in the everyday lives of women. The discourse of equality has not resulted in equality for most women in most places. There is a sense in which the conditions of women and the progress towards a true empowerment seem to have become frozen in time. There may be stories of "improvement" in the conditions of women, but in many respects it is more meaningful to measure the distance left to go rather than to measure the distance come. Indeed, it is possible to recount too many incidents in which women have lost ground in a backlash against their increased powers. It is almost as if political rhetoric, rather than true will and commitment guides actions for change.

From this major theme, and the problem embedded within it, a second theme arose in discussions: the need for a reshaped and different paradigm of action. This paradigm would basically ensure that promises and acknowledgments of women´s importance in the world are realized in concrete ways.

A DIFFERENT PARADIGM

This paradigm is about creating, not the feminization, but rather the feminist-isation of our worlds. Basic to it is the integration of concepts which might traditionally be viewed as dichotomous and the inclusion of a sense of urgency.

A. Feminist-isation of our worlds

Although this word was not proposed in Chiangmai, it captures for me the essence of many of the discussions. A paradigm which is concerned with the feminist-isation of our worlds is one in which women are not an "add-on" but rather an integral, active, powerful part which shapes the mainstream. Women´s empowerment is addressed not by default but rather purposefully. Women are located at the center and their essential critical role in society is accorded its full significance. This requires managerial and structural adjustments to incorporate women as agents of power acting both within and outside the structures of power. The notion of "woman" is deconstructed and reconstructed to create a vision of women, skilled women with women´s strengths, capturing and creating sites of power at every level. At the same time, this paradigm systematizes those arrangements which already are working successfully to empower women.

This paradigm is not about creating fragmented showpieces of women´s empowerment. Nor is it about addressing the needs of women during moments of transition. Rather it is about creating sustained strategies to redress gender inequities effectively. It moves beyond talking about basic needs to achieving fundamental rights - human rights and women´s rights. It is an evolutionary process in which, through reflection, women and men come to understand women´s rights to envisage a different world and to recreate the present one.

B. Integration of concepts

An important element of this new paradigm rests in its acknowledgment of the constant shifts and changing rhythms in our worlds. There was a sense in our discussions at

Chiangmai that the traditional dichotomies of man/woman, cognitive/affective, public/private, local/global, government/non-government were not stable and did not serve women well - that the essentialist position represented by those dichotomies is dangerous. Both in conceptualizing and strategising for women's empowerment, it seems that we must base our work in compromise, in integrating and merging concepts which traditionally have been represented as oppositional. At the center of this paradigm of action must be women's empowerment.

Embedded in many of the discussions at the workshop were the changing notions of "man" and "woman". At one level, it seems important to recognize real differences between men and women. At another level, it seems equally important to realize the similarities between the two groups and the diversities within each group. It is necessary to broaden our concerns beyond just those of women, to weave men into the process of women's empowerment, to connect with their networks and to count them as allies. It is important to work with them inside the current paradigm of action to establish the new paradigm of action rather than to compete against them. Conversely, it is important to value the differences encompassed by the term "woman" and to value women of all races, classes, ages, abilities and ethnicities. Women's empowerment will be furthered when all these stories, experiences and knowledge are shared.

As discussed at Chiangmai, an integrative approach also merges the cognitive and the affective. The logical economic rationale of structural adjustment and the new right ideology becomes more than the recognition of women's role in contributing to the economic stability of a country. Rather, it also recognizes that women's role is often tied to their pain of subordination and exploitation in the workplace. At the same time, it recognizes the uniqueness of women's contribution and the location of those contributions beyond just the paid workplace. In other words, it merges the cognitive and the affective both in formulating the issue of women and work and in valuing women's paid and unpaid work.

Similarly the dichotomous notions of public and private spheres are integrated more holistically in a reshaped paradigm. Traditionally, the public sphere has been identified as primarily patriarchal, political and orientated to full time employment while the private sphere is about the family, domestic and apolitical. "Man" is cast in opposition to "woman". These divisions seem too stark and unrelated to women's lives as women increasingly struggle to engage both spheres successfully. Further, as several women noted, this division ignores the intimate sphere - that part of our lives which comes from the heart and includes our sexuality and our spirituality. This sphere has the potential to be embedded within the others, and to enrich them with intrinsic characteristics of sensitivity and caring. Together, the merged spheres allow us to select from patriarchal structures those elements which can be used to empower women yet at the same time to treasure those elements which we identify as primarily used by women.

The seminar-workshop also recognized that local and global concerns increasingly are integrated, rather than discrete, phenomena. The nature of women's dilemmas in a particular local site must not be lost, but at the same time, the links between the local situation and the reality of women and their use/abuse in the global economy cannot be denied. The local character of women's situation may be unique, but at the same time women's "First" and "Developing" identities are merging as they confront global issues such as fundamentalism, militarization and an endangered environment. Women can no longer afford to focus solely on the concerns of those women who are within their own country´s boundaries. Our concerns and networks must extend beyond our own borders. After all, the economic, technological and political ties among countries are so interwoven and interlinked that programmes which foster women´s empowerment locally may create either negative or positive consequences for women´s empowerment in other nations. Those same ties may mean that women are in fact `exported´ as part of an international economic programme.

In much the same way, it is necessary to harmonize government and non-government dichotomies. The professional adult educator and the grassroots worker cannot afford to be separated in the struggle towards women´s empowerment. Exchanges of information, resources and strategies are needed if women are to occupy spaces of power in all locations. Strong networks which reach across organizations must be developed to create effective strategies for change. Communication lines must be opened and improved so that the "real" situation of women can be shared, understood. Collaboration on collecting the details of these situations is crucial to making strong arguments for change.

C. Inclusion of a sense of urgency

As noted above, there was a sense at Chiangmai that CONFINTEA V would be a moment of strong possibility and potential for women´s empowerment. The discussions had a stronger flavor than that, however. There seemed to be a feeling of urgency which underlay much of the meeting. At one level of course, it was related to our crowded agenda in which the tasks we had to accomplish seemed to exceed the time in which we were to do them!

At a deeper level, however, it seemed to be connected to the decades of experience with women´s empowerment that many women brought with them to Chiangmai. The stories we shared both formally and informally were compelling. However, as we shared our knowledge of the experiences of women and our struggles for empowerment across the wide range of our nations, discouraging similarities emerged. Many of the stories seemed all-to familiar in their general character if not in the particularities of the cases. The urgency seemed related to the confirmation, yet again, that the progress toward attaining women´s empowerment continues to be very slow, extremely unsteady and perpetually painful. The need for women´s empowerment through adult learning seemed all the more immediate and compelling for this long history. Most women in the seminar-workshop displayed an heightened impatience for real changes. At the same time, they showed steady resolve, optimism, positive energy and a clear commitment to realizing the true empowerment of women.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have attempted to capture the flavor of the Chiangmai "International Seminar Workshop on Promoting the Empowerment of Women through Adult Learning." I have done that by exploring the recurring themes which arose throughout the formal and informal discussions and debates. One theme highlighted the important location of CONFINTEA V at a critical juncture point for women´s empowerment. A second theme explored the elements of a different paradigm of action which underpinned our discussions. Those elements included the "feminist"-isation of our worlds, the integration of concepts, and the inclusion of a sense of urgency. The women at the Chiangmai seminar-workshop were drawn together to further the gender sensitivity of the Agenda for the Future and the Draft Declaration. When the energy, time and commitment evident at Chiangmai move into the wider CONFINTEA V forum, the issue of empowerment of women through adult learning cannot be ignored.

LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

1. **Miriam Berlak** has done a lot of education work among trade unions in Argentina.

2. **Celita Eccher** is the coordinator of REPEM, a Latin American Network of Women Educators.

3. **Chan Lean Heng** teaches at the School of Social Sciences, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.

4. **Sara Hlupekile Longwe** is the Chairperson of FEMNET and is a gender trainer in Zambia.

5. **Gillian Marie** is an experienced adult educator, presently Assistant Director at the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand.

6. **Renuka Mishra** is Director of NIRANTAR, a Center for Women and Education in India.

7. **Dr. Malena de Montis** is the Executive Director of CENZONTLE, an NGO in Nicaragua.

8. **Varda Muhlbauer** is Head of the Research and Educational Opportunities Department of NAAMAT, a women's organization in Israel.

9. **Grace Noval** is the Education Coordinator of the Center for Women´s Resources in the Philippines.

10. **Nanda Pok** is the Executive Director of Women for Prosperity, a NGO in Cambodia.

11. **Dr. Joyce Stalker** is Senior Lecturer at the Dept.of Education, University of Waikato, New Zealand.

12. **Dr. Nelly Stromquist** is Professor at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.

13. **Ngarau Tarawa** is working with Central King Country R.E.A.P. as Maori Community Education Organiser, in Taumarunui, North Island, Aotearoa/New Zealand.

14. **Caridad Tharan** is Senior Coordinator of the Special Projects of the International Council on Management of Population Programmes in Malaysia.

15. **Tran Thi Hoa** is the Senior Coordinator of the Vietnam Women´s Union.

16. **Sofia Valdivielso**is both a literacy teacher and a researcher based in the Canary Islands in Spain.

17. **Prof. Shirley Walters** is the Director of the Center for Adult and Continuing Education (CACE), University of Western Cape, South Africa.

18. **Dr. Sheila Parvyn Wamahiu** is a Gender and Education consultant at the Forum for African Women Educationalist (FAWE).

19. **Christine Yeh** works at the Women´s Programme Department of the Singapore National Trades Union Congress.

20. **Dr. Miryam Zúñiga E.** is Professor at the Center for Gender Studies, University of Del Valle, Cali, Colombia.